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- This page from the *Aztec Codex Fejery-Mayer* (held in the Liverpool City Museum) shows the god Tezcatlipoca, patron of the Aztecs and a god associated with war and with the receipt of human sacrifice. He is depicted here eating the arm of a sacrificed prisoner.
The illustration on page 408 is a detail from *Códex Cospi* (held in the University Library, Bologna) and shows the Aztec god making offerings before a temple in which an eagle sits. Both illustrations are reproduced from *The Aztec Gods and Gods in Ancient Mexico* by Cottle Burland and Werner Forman (1984, 46, 0856139378), the paperback edition of which has recently been published by Orbis. The book has not previously been published in this form.

Songs and sagas of the old New World

Gordon Brotherston

JOHN BIERHORST (Editor and translator)
Cantares Mexicanos: Songs of the Aztecs
599pp. Stanford University Press. \$48.50.
08047 1182 8

JOHN BIERHORST
A Nahuatl-English Dictionary and Concordance to the Cantares Mexicanos with an Analytical Transcription and Grammatical Notes
751pp. Stanford University Press. \$69.50.
08047 1183 6

DENNIS TEDLOCK (Editor and translator)
Popol vuh: The definitive edition of the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life and the Glories of Gods and Kings
380pp. New York: Simon and Schuster.
\$19.95.
0671 45241 X

Mexico, 1519-21: Hernán Cortés came, saw, and conquered; or rather, he did in his own view of the event. The missionary friars who followed in his footsteps quickly began to see things differently, and were for their part by no means as confident of what has been called "the spiritual conquest" of Mexico. Today their doubts seem well founded, evidence having been provided above all by texts in the native Mexican or Mesoamerican tradition, newly edited and translated like the two major examples under review here: the *Cantares Mexicanos* and the *Popol vuh*. The originals of both these date from the sixteenth century, though they first claimed public attention only in the nineteenth; and both extend to alphabetic versions of the two main literary languages of Mesoamerica, Nahuatl or Aztec (the *Cantares*) and Maya (the *Popol vuh*), the long-standing pre-Columbian literary tradition of that area. Approaching texts of this order, from so difficult a moment in the history of relations between the Old and New Worlds, demands a certain tact: this is something the editors in question, John Bierhorst and Dennis Tedlock, have already displayed in previous studies of native American literature.

Your hearts are shaken down as patting, o Motezuma. "I come bringing forth, come shaking down, these laughing ones. The Quetzal butterfly flowers come winging like plumes: I cause them to dance, making skilful music with a jade-water conch horn, melting jade flutes as though gold. "I crave your flowers, o Life-Giver, o God. Shaking them down, I'm provided with songs." (Song 44)

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MERVYN FROST

Scholars in the discipline of international relations have for the most part avoided moral theory. The author examines the reason both forward (or implicitly accepted) for ignoring it and finds that none of them stands up to close scrutiny; and he makes a start towards the construction of a normative theory which will be useful in seeking answers to some of the crucial questions involved.
280 pp. 0 521 30372 8 £22.50 net

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 2RU, England

dissolved back into water: in contradiction, the second proved too hard and inflexible. These were the "doll" people who used everything for their own exclusive benefit and who in the reign of darkness fell victim to raiders from the sky and to a domestic revolt in which their dogs and turkeys, and even their kitchen utensils, turned on them. As Alejo Carpentier observed, this element in American cosmogony makes of it perhaps the only one on the planet to warn against the dangers of exploitation and of the machine.

While these two operations result from direct cosmic control, specifically the communication between Heart of the Sky (likewise invoked in the *Cantares*) and Fether-snake, or the plumed serpent lying meditative and iridescent in the water, the story as it unfolds comes to rely more on the agency and efforts of earthly characters themselves. In the next episode, set in the time of the doll people, these appear from the dream world of childhood, archetypes clad in scales or feathers whom the young hero Twins overcome thanks to their solidarity with early mammals. Arranged as a perfect quartet of sub-episodes, this stage of the text deals with metamorphosis and biological evolution while assigning names to the fixed stars and picking out the Pleiades within the zodiac.

Finally, the Twins' story is integrated into the full epic of their own and their father's lives: the astronomical model here is the apparent descent into the underworld, between west and east, of the planetary bodies in the zodiac, especially the sun and moon, Venus and Mercury. On descending, the father meets his death at the hands of the Lords of the Underworld or Xibalba, cigar-smoking potentates who excel in the rubber-ball game (the courts for which are found in the lowest archaeological stratum in Mesoamerica), and possessors already of the first plants developed in the New World. So that it is only miraculously, from the spittle of his skull, that the Twins are conceived by Blood Girl and can continue the story, carried to the upper world in her womb. Before themselves descending, they displace their monkey-like elder half-brothers, whose mother Alligator Macaw had genes inferior to those of Blood Girl, a daughter of Xibalba. Victorious where their father had failed, they lead the Lords of Xibalba actually to desire their own death; and they prepare the way for the creation of contemporary humans from maize, the crop which entered the Mesoamerican economy somewhere near 3000BC, the calendrical start of the present Era. Set in what is now palpably political time, the last half of the text recounts Quiche' oral history, from days at lowland Tula, the first named city, to battles with people already occupying the Maya highlands.

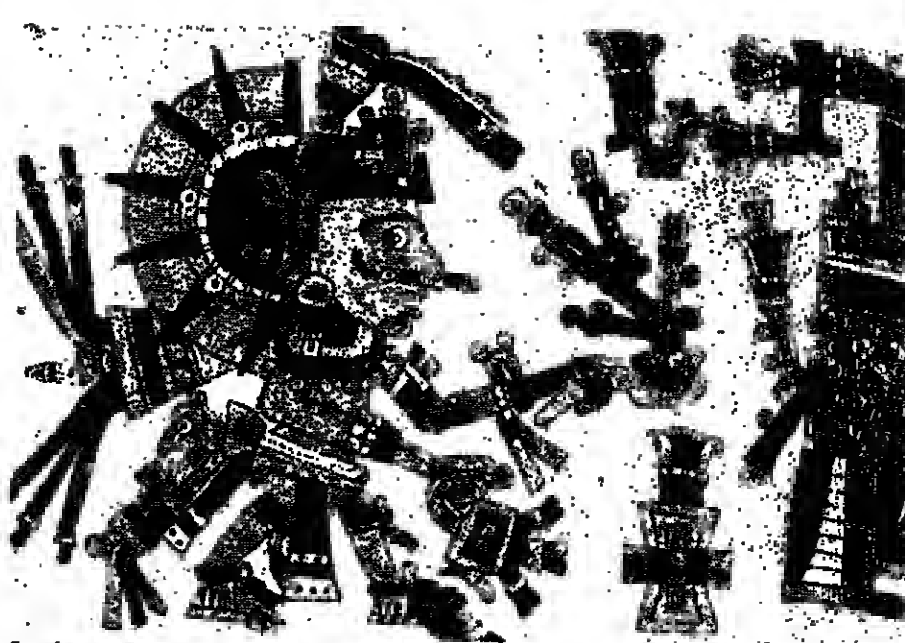
Overall, the *Popol vuh*, of which this is the briefest possible summary, stands as a masterpiece not just of New World but of world literature. Its scope makes of it a touchstone for cosmogonies from the New World as a whole: the story of the four world ages or Suns recounted in Nahuatl in the *Cuauhxicalli Annals*, for example; and beyond Mesoamerica such accounts as Guaman Poma's *Inca Chronicle* and the Orinoco Carib *Watuuna*. Its intricate structure and pattern of time-scales, and its esoteric use of ritual Numbers and Signs, formally reflect the philosophy of time it recounts, and demand that it be read on several levels. This is the means, too, by which its time-spans are actually measured, down to the geological hundreds of millions of years more explicitly recorded in other native texts, all within a system which relates such simple-minded Western categories as synchronic and diachronic, mythic and historical, and so forth.

The first major translation of the work directly into English was provided by Munro Edmonson in 1971. Edmonson drew on his expertise as an anthropologist while at the same time drawing out the literariness of the text, not least its verse couplets, and its intricate structure of parts and episodes. Dennis Tedlock too is an anthropologist endowed with a keen literary sense, and was once a student of Edmonson's. He works directly from the Quiche, though unlike Edmonson he does not publish the original on the facing page. His particular contributions stem from two main sources: the time he has spent with the Quiche, agreeably testified to in his well-chosen photo-

graphic illustrations; and certain recent research into lowland Maya art and literature of the Classic period (AD 300-900), which throws new light on the highland text.

Tedlock's intimacy with the modern Quiche comes through in many new insights, often taken from conversations with the shaman Andrés Xiloj, with whom he went through the entire text. As a result, in the key opening description of the very first imaginable time on earth, he is the better able to gauge the tense and action of the verbs: "Now it still ripples, now it still murmurs, ripples, it still sighs, still hums, and it is empty under the sky." This takes us further from the sub-Genesis wording of previous translations, as does Tedlock's neat observation on the apparent parody of Adam as a "mud-person". Becoming familiar with the Quiche, and the ritual and calendar they still use today, helps him in particular to confirm Heart of the Sky "One Leg" as the hurricane (possibly a Maya word); to attach star-names to constellations; and, along the lines of published work by others (which he doesn't cite), to reinstate midwifery as a factor in the ritual *ronalamal* and as a profession honoured in the text.

From comparisons with Classic Maya culture and lowland hieroglyphic texts, notably a series of vase paintings recently published as "scenes from the *Popol vuh*", Tedlock hypothesizes about the meaning of particular characters in the Quiche text, above all of the Twins, arguing cogently for their multiple identity and shifting astronomical significance. Against this it should be said that his insistence elsewhere on the universal significance of the synodic Venus cycle, as this is set out in the hieroglyphic Dresden screenfold, tends to dull



See the caption to the cover picture, page 406.

our awareness of the Quiche texts' finer structures and of how it moves, from episode to episode, through whole levels of time within a vast New World scheme of evolution. Nor does he choose to question the unproven assertion that the *Popol vuh* was originally written in lowland Maya hieroglyphic script rather than the iconographic variety found elsewhere, which is the one more readily identifiable with the "Tula script" referred to in the text itself. This in turn does not encourage Tedlock to recognize ritual paradigms in the text that are largely attenuated in the hieroglyphic tradition, like the midwife's Nine Night Figures or the story of Blood Girl or the augurs' Thirteen

Birds in the highly specific roles assigned to birds throughout the Quiche text. And it affects, too, his diagnosis of the "written" and "oral" antecedents of the *Popol vuh*, a subject on which in general he is a widely acknowledged authority, though admittedly less so when it comes to the thorny corpus of texts in Mesoamerican script.

Tedlock's book is described in its subtitle as "The definitive edition of the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life and the Glories of Gods and Kings". At the very least, like Bierhorst's edition of the *Cantares*, it should be welcomed as the best introduction so far, in English, to an American classic.

mistakes arise from Granzotto's ignorance of the historical context of Columbus's career. He thinks, for example, that the Genoese specialized in the spice trade, eschewed heavy cargoes, were forming "new social classes", reached (in the person of Antonio Maldonado) "the banks of the Senegal", were untroubled in Spain, victimized Jews and retained Christianity only briefly after 1492. Equally unhelpful in a biography of Columbus is his failure to acquire even the most elementary knowledge of late medieval cosmography. Granzotto ignores some major sources and seems unaware of the ubiquity and variety of speculation about the extent of the Atlantic and the nature and location of antipodal lands; he thinks that Columbus "read" Marinus of Tyre and heard of him from Pierre d'Ally. These and other gross errors could have been avoided by verifying references.

Taviani, despite his claims to scholarship, is hardly more reliable. His book is monumental, but is so prolix, digressive, repetitive and derivative that its useful content is slight and can all be found elsewhere. He has difficulty controlling his material, brooding, sometimes apparently at random, between short, ill-connected paragraphs and "chapters", often less than a thousand words long. He has compiled a massive array of bibliographical references, but his method is capricious rather than critical; he fails to discriminate between secondary authorities, giving at different points, as much weight to Eric Bradford or Washington Irving as to scholars like Rumeu de Armas, Verrilland or Alain Milhau; his arguments are often of the fifth-millennium-Frenchman-can't-be-wrong variety. And although he usually shows a thorough acquaintance with (albeit not always a sound understanding of) the works he cites, his command of the sources is patchy for the period outside the chronological limits of Columbus's life. His information, in particular on the Navigator, the late medieval gold trade and the transmission of classical geography in the late Middle Ages, is garbled and defective. Wary scholars may find some use for this book as a bibliographical quarry, but they will prefer the cheap Italian edition of 1982. For students and "general readers" (at whom the English edition seems aimed), this book, like Granzotto's, is a siren in a Sea of Darkness: it shall bear many more such calls, no doubt, between now and the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage in 1992.

The end of procrastination

Anthony Hartley

DAVID COATES and JOHN HILLARD (Editors)
The Economic Decline of Modern Britain: The debate between left and right
366pp. Brighton: Wheatsheaf. £22.50 (paperback, £8.95).
0745010176

The title of this book begs a question. For its subject-matter is, in fact, Britain's industrial decline, and it is assumed, without much proof, that this is equivalent to "economic decline". Implicit throughout this collection of "readings" on British "de-industrialization", dating from the 1960s to the present, is the axiom that in an economy a healthy service sector is, in some way or other, inferior to a tottering manufacturing one. This is a value judgment which makes curious reading at a time when, to all post-industrial societies, more and more of the labour force is employed in providing services.

The Economic Decline of Modern Britain addresses itself to two questions. First, what are the immediate causes of the decline of British industry, which, so it seems, did not become acute before the 1970s? And, second, why has it been overtaken by European and other competitors over the past hundred years or so? Unfortunately, there are some gaps in the discussion of both these points. Little is said about British industry's performance in the inter-war years when it did not do so badly, developing new technologies and recovering more quickly from the slump than any other Western country with the exception of Dr Schacht's Germany. There is not much either about Mrs Thatcher's government, apart from an essay by one of the editors which falls into the category of invective rather than discussion. In particular, there are no recent statistics which would reflect the real economic growth by Britain since 1983. Nor, oddly, is there any discussion of the economic consequences of Britain's entry into the European Community and the reorientation of trade that has resulted from this. Yet this change has some relevance to a subject that can hardly be treated effectively through the determined provincialism which presides over some of these contributions.

Since the early 1970s, British industry has had to cope with sweeping changes in the type and location of industry and in the direction of trade; with inflation and a low return on investment (2.9 per cent in 1976); with the resistance of trade unions to industrial rationalization; and with regulations which have increased the cost of employing labour. Small wonder that the onset of recession and the delayed arrival of structural change have brought with them a

high rate of unemployment. Had the rationalization of British manufacturing industry started in the late 1960s or early 1970s, then it is probable that many of the redundancies could have been absorbed. But, of course, the health of British industry cannot be measured by the numbers employed in it, as, for example, is the case in Nigel Harris's contribution. On the contrary, it is probable that the less labour manufacturing industry employs, the healthier it is likely to be. Recently British Steel has been pulled back from the brink of extinction by large-scale cuts in its workforce.

These are world-wide problems which exist, for instance, in the other countries of the European Community. After all, there is a "Dutch disease" as well as a *mal anglaise*. Why then has the crisis been more acute in Britain? Here, no doubt, we can start with Eric Hobsbawm's sensible remark that "the loss of dynamism in British industry . . . was the result ultimately of the early and long-sustained start as an industrial power". This, at any rate, seems more probable than M. J. Weiner's theory of a British "anti-industrial" culture, which was in fact a set of attitudes common to the Romantic movement as a whole.

What is undoubtedly true is that the existence of the British Empire resulted in a pre-occupation on the part of imperial rule, which had little to do with economic dynamism and which, when extrapolated into solutions for domestic problems, meant increasing reliance on the intervention of a state whose prestige was guaranteed by its international standing. The British Empire may have been acquired in a fit of absent-mindedness, but it was kept by extreme attention, which formed habits of thought unsuited to entrepreneurial activity.

Many causes of British industrial decline are mentioned in this book, with the familiar scapegoats of "finance capital", the class system and the trade unions prominent among them. However, it might be more instructive to look in another direction - towards those British virtues of moderation and a taste for compromise on which we have traditionally prided ourselves, but whose counterpart in the United States has been a more extreme, more aggressive and more individualistic attitude. Keith Middlemas has shown how, under the influence of two wars, institutions were created with successfully mediated industrial and social conflict. The perfectly valid ideal of "one nation", generated in wartime, resulted in a disinclination to do anything to which any class of society might object. Change is always unwelcome to somebody, and the desire to achieve a consensus before changing anything ends in stagnation. Of course, the transformation cannot be put off for ever, and delay will increase the price to be paid for it. Perhaps Britain has now arrived at the point where procrastination ends. If so, the symptoms which we feel every day as pain are also signs of life.

Grandfather in Green

My grandfather, the Budapest shoemaker, wrote plays in his spare time and then he died. His body became a pebble on a beach of softness across which swept the pale green tide.

Pale green, I think, would suit him as a tint - under his eye, or thinly flexed across the hooked bridge of his nose. His sour complexion was cooking apples, a summary of loss.

Each a pucker in the flesh. His waistcoat was grey as clouds, a pale green handkerchief blossoming from the pocket. Even his tongue would sit in his mouth, soft and green as a leaf.

And so he returned to nature after all, the pale green gall within him in the shut cavern of his stomach, and the green smell of gas still lingering in the hut.

GEORGE SZIRTES

Political lucky dip

John Turner

DAVID OWEN
A United Kingdom: An argument and a challenge for a better Britain
220pp. Penguin. Paperhack, £2.95.
014 0093486

The greatest challenge presented by *A United Kingdom* is to discover its argument. David Owen endlessly repeats the point that Britain has been badly governed for the past thirty years; that this has led to economic decline; and that proportional representation will make everything better. This is because the swings of two-party government have caused damaging reversals of economic policy in Britain. By contrast, the economies of other countries with proportional representation systems and coalition governments have flourished. In Britain PR would bring about a majority coalition government in which the Social Democratic Party led by David Owen would play a part; and the SDP's policies would, in due course, lead to economic regeneration. In particular, coalition would thrive on consensus, and thwart the confrontational enthusiasms of Labour and Conservative.

Some of what Owen argues is undoubtedly right. The SDP is very unlikely to make an impact on Parliament without PR of some sort. Hence every centre party in British politics has agitated for PR ever since Ramsay MacDonald kicked the ladder down in the Liberals' faces in 1929. PR is Owen's best hope for the premiership; he knows it, and no one will grudge him the attempt to get it. After that, the argument begins to creak. It takes a pretty determined ignorance of history to locate the origin of Britain's economic decline within the last thirty years. To look back to the blessed days of coalition (remember the essential decency of the Lloyd George Coalition and the economic

dynamism of the National Government?) is to plunge head first into Wonderland. It is contestable whether acts of government, let alone forms of government, determine economic outcomes. Faced with these problems, Owen calls in a *non sequitur*, remarking that "the fact that Italy in 1985 surpassed the UK in its standard of living implies that the quality of Italian government is better than ours". Another, in some ways more remarkable, example is the appeal to the case of Israel "with its too-pure system of proportional representation, [which] has had an enviable record of national unity when forced to defend the state". Indeed it has, and if Britain were attacked by a coalition of displaced Cornish Celts, with logistical support from western Brittany and County Cork, so no doubt should we.

But Owen does not have much time for difficult economic argument or logical niceties, for he has to get on with the politics. Much of the book is taken up with a mass of detail churned out of the SDP research machine. Some of it is very, very old: technical education, first raised by Prince Albert, is still on the agenda, as is industrial co-partnership, a union-busting ploy first thought up in the 1880s. Some of it is the detailed policy of yesterday afternoon: twenty-four-hour caretakers for high-rise blocks, "factor analysis" for public sector pay calculations, more nurses in National Health Service administration. There is an open-handed generosity to the universities that reflects the SDP's large following among academics. There is a distinct affection for "the market" as a tool of management, but no attempt to define the famous "social market" theory whose nature remains quite opaque. It is a lucky dip of proposals, each apparently written by an "expert" pressure group more used to communicating with its own kind than with the general public, and not very good at relating its work to a common set of values or beliefs about the causes of change. This is a book like Winston Churchill's pudding: it has no ideology, and it has no theme.

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Fundamental matters of government

Jeremy Waldron

JEFFREY JOWELL and DAWN OLIVER (Editors)
The Changing Constitution
 377pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £25
 (paperback, £12.95).
 019 8761767

It used to be the custom for lawyers and politicians in this country to congratulate themselves on the fact that the British political system lacked a written constitution and a formally entrenched declaration of fundamental rights along the lines of those found in most other countries. Paper rights by themselves, it was said, were no hedge against repression, and what Burke called the "entailed liberties of Englishmen" were said to be more serviceable against tyranny than the "abstract" and "alien" doctrine of the rights of man. As the father of English constitutional law, A. V. Dicey, put it, though our Habeas Corpus Acts "declare no principle and define no rights, they are for practical purposes worth a hundred constitutional articles guaranteeing individual liberty".

The essays in *The Changing Constitution* have been written one hundred years after the publication of Dicey's *The Law of the Constitution*, and their effect is to shake our confidence in that traditional view. In "The Constitution: Decline and renewal", Anthony Lester shows that Englishmen are being driven increasingly to seek European remedies for the protection of their native rights, as the apparatus of English law proves incapable of checking such abuses as the maltreatment of detainees in Northern Ireland, the deprivation of the right of British Asians to enter their only country of

citizenship, the wrongful confinement of patients in mental hospitals, the restriction of prisoners' rights to communicate with their lawyers, judicial interference with freedom of expression, and so on. Lester points out the irony in our now regarding as "foreign" principles that were first formulated by English political philosophers long before they found expression in the constitutions of the American and European republics. And he warns of the dangers involved in our failure to reform our own constitutional arrangements: the protection of rights already evokes as a matter of course the "xenophobia" of a people still suspicious of the European connection and the "resentment of legislators jealous of the dilution of their pretended sovereignty".

Parliamentary sovereignty and the prospect of the entrenchment of a Bill of Rights is a major theme in this collection. It is easy to see how Parliament might give a Bill of Rights paramount force over the exercise of executive power, but could it limit its own competence in the same way? A. W. Bradley suggests that this is in large part a matter of how the courts would respond to any subsequent legislation that was incompatible with the Bill of Rights: "the sovereignty of Parliament describes in formal terms the relationship which exists between the legislature and the courts". I wonder if this isn't too legalistic a definition. Parliamentary sovereignty is a doctrine so much about the behaviour of officials as about the behaviour of judges, and officials usually respond directly to legislation and only exceptionally to the direction of the courts. If, at some future time, it became apparent that, in cases of conflict, officials were administering, say, European Community law rather than local statutes, that would be a reason for doubting the survival of

parliamentary sovereignty whatever the courts were saying. One of the gaps in this collection is the lack of any detailed discussion of the role of judges in our system, but clearly it would be wrong to treat the courts as an entirely independent variable in the constitutional equation. I think Bradley is closer to the mark when he writes later in his essay that the judicial attitude towards European law and the possibility of a local Bill of Rights "might develop in response to legislative initiative and might be affected by a wide range of as yet unknown political developments". It would have been nice, though, to have an essay speculating about what these developments might be.

Judicial control is only one way of restraining the executive. Jeffrey Jowell points out that judges are usually anxious not to be seen interfering with the substance of ministerial decisions: on substantive matters, the executive is said to be accountable primarily to Parliament, not the courts. But this is not always a responsibility that Parliament can or should embrace. Though the organs of Parliamentary accountability have improved in recent years, there are many aspects of executive power which are difficult for outsiders to scrutinize effectively. Terence Daintith argues that the executive works through the deployment of economic incentives as well as through the imposition of law and regulation, and the former power is much less visible from a parliamentary point of view. Moreover, as several of the essays emphasize, the executive should not be seen as a monolith. The control of local authorities by Parliament raises serious issues of autonomy, the control of public corporations raises issues of managerial efficiency, and the control of the police issues of political neutrality; and all of these are different from control of the aloof

monarchical establishment in Whitehall.

Even the apparatus of central government does not act as a unit. In one of the best essays in the collection, Michael Elliot points out the way in which the Treasury checks and restrains the activities of other departments, remarking that "to suggest to any inhabitant of Whitehall that public-expenditure decisions were not subject to constant scrutiny would, rightly, provoke a hollow laugh". There is an important general point here. We must not assume that the traditional categories of constitutional law are the best ones for understanding the workings of our political system. The use of terms like "executive" can too easily obscure the fact that the agencies of the state are capable of being used as instruments of public accountability as well as instruments of political power.

The lack of a written constitution in the United Kingdom has at least one advantage: it means that we are not pinned down to any ancient or pre-established theory about what is fundamental and what is not in our political system. Most people would agree that laws like parliamentary sovereignty and ministerial responsibility count as "constitutional", but a volume like this is able to focus on topics like the organization of political parties, the management of the nationalized industries, the power of select committees and the issue of proportional representation, and show that these also raise fundamental questions about the way in which Britain is governed. The distinction between constitutional law, on the one hand, and the theory and science of politics, on the other, has always been an artificial one. It is a pleasant surprise to read through a volume whose editors are so obviously committed to closing that gap.

example, by making federal damage actions available to whites only — or institute censorship by manipulating jurisdiction to grant injunctions.

A second major question concerning the separation of powers is the long struggle over the power of legislative veto of presidential and executive action broadly condemned in 1953 by the Supreme Court in *In re Chastity*. Tribe is rightly caustic about the Court's invalidation of an entire class of statutes on the basis of an atypical example, and even suggests that the decision might represent a conservative leaning against the legislative machinery, emerging since the 1930s, of the modern administrative state. Perhaps an alternative explanation is that the Court had used up its stock of understanding for administrative necessity in *Dames and Moore v Regan* (the Iranian claims case), in which the Court upheld the President's entitlement under Congressional authority to suspend the contractual claims of American citizens and to use their property rights as diplomatic bargaining counters against Ayatollah Khomeini.

All of this reinforces the view that the key line between structural or procedural questions and the protection by the courts of substantive rights is an inept basis for generalization about the role of judicial review in the United States. That in a way is one of the implicit themes of these essays. There is plenty that is explicitly on substantive rights — in particular, on the Court's recent invention or discovery of a jumble of new categories of free speech and action for professional advertisers, corporate businesses and protesting anti-nuclearists. Despite Tribe's initial disclaimer, his acute and wide-ranging commentary also offers extensive proof that Americans cannot simply choose what to believe about the Constitution in the absence of all interpretive theory. If there have been some odd theories about lately, the remedy is better theories, not agnosticism.

The second edition of *Justice and Presidential History* by Henry J. Abraham (430pp. Oxford University Press: £24.50; 0-19-50349-1) has recently been published. A chapter has been added to cover a dozen years in which the Court has continued to manifest its ambivalence about its role.

Out-rationalizing the rationalists

Murray MacBeath

DOUGLAS R. HOFSTADTER
Metamagical Themas: Questing for the essence of mind and pattern
 852pp. Viking. £18.95.
 0670 808870

The title of Douglas R. Hofstadter's new book is too cryptic to give one a clue as to the contents. In fact, it is an anagram of "Mathematical Games", the name of a column Martin Gardner contributed to *Scientific American* for many years; and Hofstadter's book is a collection of the twenty-six columns that he wrote as Gardner's successor, together with seven other pieces and postscripts to all thirty-three. But if the title is uninformative, no alternative could readily have conveyed to the innocent browser an idea of what to expect inside: articles on self-referential sentences (such as "This is a self-referential sentence"), sexist language, Chomsky, tessellation, typefaces, Rubik's Cube, the programming language "Lisp", quantum mechanics, artificial intelligence, the genetic code and the arms race.

Intiguing connotations are drawn between these disparate topics: the themes of pattern and analogy, of perception and creativity, constantly recur. Some of the pieces are less well integrated than others; among them a woefully superficial piece on literary nonsense, in which the demands of meeting a monthly deadline perhaps make themselves apparent, and the Chomsky article, which is a reminder of how difficult it is to be metamagical about music. But the successes greatly outweigh the failures, and the skill with which Hofstadter communicates the information needed to understand the more technical topics is remarkable, while his enthusiasm for everything he writes about should infect any reader who is not put off by the constant autobiographical slant, or by the puns and the schoolboy expletives — "good grief!", "wheew!", "groan!", "super-ugh!".

Metamagical Themas is not a sequel to Hofstadter's brilliant first book, *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, but it does share many of the same central concerns; in particular, the view that if "genuine artificial intelligence" is to be created, it will have to be from the bottom up: cognition — that rational-seeming level of our minds — is a consequence of much deeper processes of myriads of interacting subcognitive structures. The rational has had entirely too much made of it in AI research; it is time for some of the irrational and subcognitive to be recognized for its pivotal role.

Hofstadter is opposed to a rationalist conception of intelligence: he thinks the mind to be less like a domino chain than "a bathtub full of spring-loaded mousetraps holding ping-pong balls", an analogy that rationalists are likely to feel is inimical to an adequate account of rationality itself. Now Hofstadter is, in fact, no enemy of rationality, as is clear from the article in which he celebrates the debunking activities of *Skeptical Inquirer*. But it is also clear that he would not go along with the view that human beings are essentially rational: that same article cites some evidence of remarkable credulity among undergraduate students.

Even more interesting is an experiment that Hofstadter himself conducted. He announced in the pages of *Scientific American* a lottery in which the first and only prize was a number of dollars equal to one million divided by the number of entries. One could enter as many times as one liked, simply by writing the number of one's entries on a single postcard. Hofstadter's money was safe: scores of entrants used their ingenuity to come up with vast numbers, thereby making the prize worthless for themselves or for anyone else. About half of the 2,000 entrants sent in only one entry, which is a good deal more sensible, in part because it implies a recognition by such people that their opponents are in the same boat as themselves. But that recognition, Hofstadter argues, could have been made more of: there was a way in which all potential entrants could have acted which would probably have secured

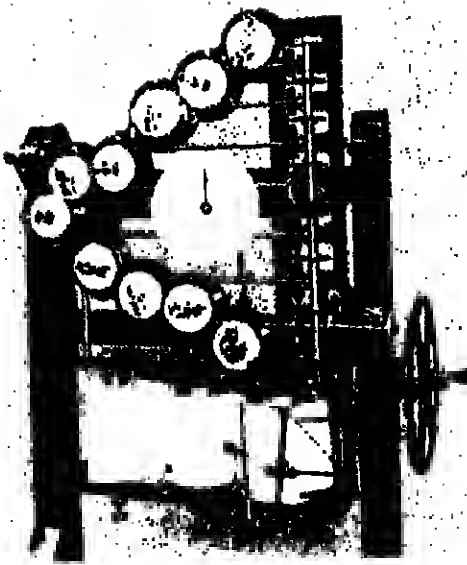
for one of them the full million dollars.

Hofstadter claims for his argument an importance which goes far beyond game theory, for he suggests that the same kind of recognition could bring an end to the nuclear arms race. The recognition that any reason that I have to adopt a particular strategy is also a reason for you to adopt the same strategy, should provide both me and you independently with powerful reasons for disarming, since that is the strategy which, if we both pursue it, leaves us both best off.

Hofstadter is now out-rationalizing the rationalists. He is advocating that, instead of being merely rational and saying "I don't know what you're going to do, so I'm best off if I play it tough", we should be super-rational and say "You're a rational being like me, so you'll do what I do; and on that assumption, I'm best off if I am accommodating." The proposition "You'll do what I do" turned out to be false in the case of the lottery, as, indeed, Hofstadter knew it would; so it is highly questionable what merit there is in an argument which employs that proposition as a premise. None the less, in the case of the arms race, it may well be that the position is more symmetrical. If not, what we have to fall back on is the terrible, though arguably rational, argument "If you do something objectionable, I'll do something very irrational."

A vigorous engagement with moral issues is what those who have read *Gödel, Escher, Bach* will find most strikingly new in *Metamagical Themas*. Another example is a chapter which invites us to assume that the word "racism" is an "awkward neologism, constructed by analogy with the well-established term 'sexism'". What follows is written as an apologetic attack on the black libbers or negriests, who object, for example, to the phrase "All whites are created equal". One of the most telling passages is this defence of the practice of the white in the street:

there is a tradition in our society of calling unemphatically blacks "Nies" and employed blacks "Mrs."



Lord Kelvin's tide predictor (1873), the first automatic analog calculator: reproduced from *Stan Augarten's Bit by Bit: An illustrated history of computers* (324pp., with over 100 colour and over 200 black-and-white illustrations. Allen and Unwin. Paperback, £9.95. 0 04 001007 4).

Most blacks — in fact, the vast majority — prefer it that way. . . . Unemployed blacks want prospective employers to know they are available, without having to ask embarrassing questions. Likewise, employed blacks are proud of having found a job, and wish to let the world know they are employed.

Most of the illustrations are an asset to the book, and it is a pity that more care was not taken with the printing of them and with the accuracy of the captions. However, there are some drawings which detract from the force of the verbal images in the text, the images which it is Hofstadter's gift to be able to dream up as a way of making accessible complex theoretical ideas. Some misfire, like the "slippery slope, along which connotations slosh back and forth"; but others will make a lasting contribution to every reader's stock of ping-pong balls.

Questioning the judiciary

Geoffrey Marshall

LAURENCE H. TRIBE
Constitutional Choices
 456pp. Harvard University Press. £27.25.
 0 674 16538 1

In the course of the past two decades American constitutional law has been treated to progressively larger injections of constitutional theory. In its transatlantic sense that term means a concern, preoccupation or obsession with the rationale and techniques of the judicial process and particularly the review of federal and state legislation. How (it is asked) can the judicial role in the moulding of national policy be justified in a democratic republic? How are the general purposes and values incorporated in the Constitution to be discovered? Should the courts inquire into the views and intentions of the founders of the Constitution? Should they scrutinize the text itself? Should they bring to bear on it their own moral intuitions, or should they defer wherever possible to the substantive policy judgments of elected legislative bodies? And so on.

Laurence H. Tribe, of the Harvard Law School, is the author of what is perhaps the best-known treatise on American constitutional law. Pending a second edition, he has provided in the essays in *Constitutional Choices* a brisk commentary on developments since 1978. (There are, strikingly, 158 pages of foot-

notes and references, solidly underpinning 265 pages of text.)

He kicks off on a distinctly sceptical note about the relevance of general guides to action. In "The Futile Search for Legitimacy" he has in mind not, I think, the general justification of the judicial branch's role in the United States polity but the legitimization of particular judicial decisions by reference to general theories or guidelines. The customary propounding of normative criteria, he argues, is fruitless, because "those who struggle to ground anything so complex as judicial review in any such more deeply secure foundation" are "destined to leave us and themselves unsatisfied — caught in an infinite regress". If we look to the intentions of the framers we may then have to ask, for example, why their intentions should matter. Each answer leads to deeper questions. But this seems unconvincing. Any justificatory move may indeed provide a regress to more general levels of argument, but the regress need not be infinite and those who have recommended deference, say, to evidence of historical intention or to alleged general purposes of the constitutional framework, have usually been happy to supply more general reasoning in support of their suggestions.

In addition, however, Tribe suggests that leaning on alleged or external criteria is in some way an attempt to avoid personal responsibility for the making of constitutional choices or an attempt to disguise the indeterminacy or inescapable subjectivity of many of the Constitution's crucial terms. Of course no one would wish to say that any given criterion or theory of construction would remove indeterminacy, but it is not easy to see how choices can simply be "made" without being made in the light of some specifiable criteria. What is to be gathered, exactly, from the proposition that "Constitutional interpretation is a practice alive with choice but laden with content"? What else could it contain or be laden with? It sounds hard work, for sure.

Tribe, one feels, is telling us just that, and inviting us to follow him. If so, we may do it the more willingly when we see that he immediately abandons his reluctance to engage in debate about general normative criteria and, in "The Pointless Flight from Substance", argues in opposition to John Hart Ely's theory, propounded in *Democracy and Distrust* (1980), that the judiciary should not (as Ely suggests)

be guided in its role by the supposition that the Constitution is in principle concerned only with establishing processes and fair procedural channels that will facilitate the making of substantive political choices by the non-judicial branches of government. On the contrary, he argues, the Constitution displays a clear commitment to substantive values, among which are religious liberty, private property, just compensation and anti-slavery. Even the most obviously procedural concerns of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, such as the securing of fair treatment for criminal defendants, make no sense except as means to a substantive end of preventing the government from treating individuals as objects, and thus looking in general to substantive right protection. These considerations, if valid, obviously imply different normative criteria for constitutional choice from those that would follow from the acceptance of Ely's procedural analysis of constitutional norms. So it seems important to avoid the wrong general normative criteria before flexing one's Constitutional choosing muscles and pitching into one's content-laden choices.

These essays range over a number of issues affecting the federal system and the federal separation of powers: racial and sexual equality, property and the Fourteenth Amendment state-action requirement. In the field of the separation of powers, two major issues of recent years have concerned the extent of Congressional power. One is the ambit of the implicit limitation on Congress's apparently unlimited power to restrict the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and indeed of all federal courts. A considerable number of jurisdiction-stripping bills have been introduced into Congress in response to judicial decisions about abortion, racial desegregation and school prayer. Tribe (perhaps here praying in aid some normative criteria of interpretation) argues that the framers of the Constitution cannot be supposed to have authorized Congress to impair any rights they please, so long as their action is clothed in the garb of a reassignment of jurisdiction. The conclusion is that Congress's jurisdictional power, under Article III (2), is itself limited by the requirements of due process and equal protection in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. Otherwise Congress could deprive particular classes of citizens of Constitutional protection — for

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cause during their talk of old times he saw that "he had not realised the enormous distance at which he had left behind the standpoint of 1845". What a scene! The letters to Meta describing it should be read with his reminiscences of the Oxford Movement in his *Memoirs* – whose existence, by the way, we owe to her.

If the Newman visit brought back the very distant past in dramatic form, there was a different kind of drama in Francis Pattison's return to England, to nurse her husband in his final illness. The closing pages of Green's book abound with memorable vignettes: Mark's last encounter with Meta in London, where he and Francis had taken a house during a temporary improvement in his health. Mrs Pattison insisted on accompanying her husband to Paddington, only to spy "her" copy of Carlyle's *Dante* on the drawing-room table. The Rector's progress in a Bath chair round the Oxford

Parks, as described by Stephen Gwynn, "dimly . . . by a shambling menial, lying more like a corpse than any living thing I have ever seen. And yet there was a singular vitality behind that parchment covered face, something powerful and repellent. Beside him walked his wife, small, erect, and ultra Parisian, all in black with a black parasol." And then the end, in Mark's beloved Yorkshire, at Harrogate, where Francis nursed her dying husband with untiring devotion. She even offered to ask Meta to pay a visit. But he refused, saying, "you are all-sufficing. You do not know how good you are to me. You are my comfort and consolation, the only one I want."

He died in excruciating pain, of cancer of the stomach. On the day before his death, so Francis Pattison reported,

the morphine passed off and then till the doctor came nurse and I stood for 4 hours witnessing the terrible fits of terror with shrieks which went through the

house and trying to ease and calm. Let not my last days be like his! The mortal misery is awful.

That evening, his last, two sides of his complex personality showed themselves. After his wife read him Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College", with its grim lines about "the painful family of Death", he commented on the poem "with all his old aptness, pregnancy and refinement". After which he dictated a cruel farewell letter to his sister Eleanor.

So ends a moving story, told in masterly fashion by Green who, as the present Rector of Lincoln College, and its historian, is of all possible authors the most qualified to tell it. "Our letters", so Meta once wrote to Mark, "would be invaluable in 1983 as showing the life of this age." Indeed, there is much to be garnered from these pages by those in search of light on Victorian Oxford, the intellectual currents of the time, and the habits and constraints

of certain segments of English middle-class society in the early 1880s. But, in the end, what chiefly remains in the reader's memory is the human drama, the story of an incongruous friendship between a young woman radiating gush, goodwill and common sense in just about equal proportions, and a selfish, sarcastic, cantankerous scholar not immune to the warmth of human affection. It was a friendship that brought some measure of love and happiness to both. As Dr Green aptly puts it: "Normally the passion of love seems romantic when it concerns only the handsome and beautiful of both sexes, young in mind, body and spirit. But love's frontiers are never closed or exclusive, in terms of either gender or appearance, or age or looks. Meta and Mark came tentatively within its territory." This is one more valuable stone to be added to that evermore strangely glowing mosaic called the Victorian age.



Hester Thrale Piozzi, a portrait by George Dance, 1793, in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

thesis" with Johnson, the word conveys the suggestion that he shared the same capacity for intellectual idiosyncrasy that be discerned in others. Her edition of *Letters to and from Samuel Johnson*, however, cannot be rescued from the accusation of manipulation. Fanny Burney considered them an "injury" to Johnson's memory, and Hannah More agreed they "ought never to have been printed". Most disturbing is the fact that the letters which Hester Thrale published as written to Johnson were in fact composed after his death. Even McCarthy is forced to admit that "these letters never sent to Johnson are . . . among her least attractive writings".

This study reveals the chameleon-like eclecticism of her poetic styles, ranging from imitations of Pope to anticipations of Shelley, but

falls short of suggesting any real imaginative originality. "Piozzi bad it in her to be a greater poet than she was", he asserts, arguing that her self-doubts as a woman writer inhibited her from achieving her full potential. "She is a strong writer: greatly maligned by her nature's sexual selections." Here and there McCarthy seeks to corroborate his thesis by importing a theoretical vocabulary which he uneasily hesitates to use. The more traditional style of the rest of the book. Thus we find adjectives "ephebes", "fore-mothers" and the pen is pen, which result in such implausible generalizations as the assertion that Anne Barlow is remembered now "if at all, chiefly for the qualoness of her married name".

In later years Hester Thrale's attitudes wavered between enthusiasm for new experiments and a residual conservatism in the Johnsonian mould. The poems of Ossian made her "half frantic with admiration", but the French Revolution filled her with horror and rage. "No, No, No, No, and will not the Lord be avenged of such a Natio as that!" she demanded. And, in the view of Mary Wollstonecraft, she appeared as one of the women who perpetuated the submissive status of the female sex.

All such contradictions are explained by McCarthy as the instinctive defence of a woman whose literary endeavours were constantly belittled and patronized by male writers. Retrospectively, her monumental history of Europe, was dismissed by *The Critical Review* as "a series of dreams by an old lady". While Horace Walpole considered her *Anecdotes* a heap of rubbish in a very vulgar style, confronted by such criticisms as these, McCarthy's combative style is understandable. She longs, he writes, to "be a Heroic Age of the female literary subculture". This book is not a static studio portrait, but a heroic sketch of the battle-front.

Victims of the mummy's curse

Adam Mars-Jones

WILLIAM BURROUGHS

Queer
134pp. Picador. £8.95.
0350294067

Queer is an unfinished novel dating from the 1950s, though its cover and blurb conspire to keep the punter in the dark about its fragmentary status. The narrative falls off in a series of ineffectual closures; but there is an impressive finish to each paragraph which makes up for the lack of a satisfactory overall shape.

The novel is accompanied by an introduction which, like any other product of hindsight, both illuminates and undermines it. Burroughs here provides a sharp portrait of Mexico City (where much of the narrative takes place), supplying background material which in a novel composed at a more leisurely pace would be worked to bit by bit so as to emerge "naturally".

But he also sets up the hero of the narrative, William Lee, as a case history, a heroin addict experiencing withdrawal and the accompanying terrible efflorescence of sexuality. The effect of this is to diminish the text, since it is not Lee's predicament which is so remarkable, but the accommodation he makes to it.

Lee wants human rather than merely sexual contact. In Chapter Two we are told that he spends the night with a Mexican boy he picks up in a bar, but this information is conveyed without detail or emphasis. His emotional appetites focus, after a few false starts, on a young man called Eugene Allerton, who is curious, complaisant, and sometimes even responsive.

Allerton is no angel, but his relationship with Lee has a muffled intermittent tenderness which suggests that the effort on Lee's part is not altogether wasted. Lee's impulses towards Allerton are described, with considerable poignancy, as if they were the pettings of an asexual body:

Lee watched the thin hands, the beautiful violet eyes, the flush of excitement on the boy's face. An imaginary hand projected with such force it seemed Allerton must feel the touch of ectoplasmic fingers caressing his ear, phantom thumbs smoothing his eyebrows, pushing the hair back from his face.

Lee registers every nuance of manipulativeness and rejection; but though his sensitivity is heightened, his priorities are shown to be authentic. A minor character, for instance, is described as showing "the ravages of the death process, the inroads of decay in flesh cut off from the living charge of contact".

In spite of its lurid title and its comic interludes, *Queer* has a tone of stoical vulnerability. Burroughs's later writings at their least persuasive display losted a cold frenzy. The relationship between the two modes is mysterious, but the introduction to *Queer* provides some indications.

The manuscript tails off after Lee and Allerton have made a trip to South America in search of the faded drug Yaga, which like some voodoo tincture can submit one person to

the will of another. Burroughs's introduction explains something not in the foreground of the manuscript: the expedition effects Lee's stabilization from addiction, since in the remote places he visits no drugs are available, except for alcohol.

There is already something odd about a sensibility which dramatizes the withdrawal from one drug as the search for another to enslave third parties. But Burroughs's introduction further editorializes the text of *Queer* by linking it with his shooting of his wife in 1951. This event, he says, "motivated and formulated" his writing, but if so its influence was to push him towards strategies of evasion and away from the sombre acceptance characteristic of *Queer*.

The great merit of the later Burroughs is that his ideas, when they aren't lucid and instantly convincing, are preposterous and instantly dismissible; very little falls between these categories. So Burroughs attributes his wife's death to the eruption of a hieroglyphic virus which invaded him from the Egyptology department of the University of Chicago in 1939; he goes to some lengths to establish that this is not a metaphorical statement (possessing entities like nothing better than posing as metaphors).

One of the most striking sentences of the *Queer* manuscript records that "The court of

fact had rejected Lee's petition", but it is only in fiction, apparently, that there can be no appeal. Burroughs backs up his version of events by citing cut-ups and comments – which he treats as oracular – from his friend Brion Gysin.

Cut-up is a legitimate device if its object is the avoidance of cliché, but like surrealism it has managed to generate its own style of cliché, its compulsory disruptions. To treat cut-ups, and a friend's casual comments, as sources of revealed truth is to add a silly mysticism to the silly demonology of the possession theory.

It's unappealing enough that a man should blame his wife's death in effect on the mummy's curse, worse that he should pose as the real casualty. Burroughs's subsequent life, apparently, has been one long struggle to escape from Control; many readers of *Queer* will feel that control (with the lower case, denoting merely human agency) is exactly what he achieved here, and, by abandoning the manuscript, rejected. In his later work, Burroughs stipulates an "algebra of need", in which one addiction substitutes for another. In *Queer*, needs have yet to be systematized, and Lee's feeling for Allerton substitutes for his heroin habit only as dny, with all its blackness, substitutes for night.

The paranoid essence

Sean French

PATRICIA HIGHSMITH

Found in the Street
277pp. Heinemann. £9.95.
043433524X

"I don't know what's worse", laments a character in Patricia Highsmith's new novel, "a solitary creep or a married creep." And indeed *Found in the Street* abounds with characters who are creeps, or might be creeps. The novel may mark another step in Highsmith's progress away from the thriller genre, but the author's singular facility for making pleasant things unpleasant has happily remained intact.

The leading characters here are a successful, happily married book illustrator and a lonely, decent old man. The two first meet when the old man, Ralph Linderman, finds Jack Sutherland's wallet in the street and returns it to him, refusing any reward. The two men are drawn together more closely by the benevolent interest they have separately taken in Elsie Tyler, a young, attractive girl working in a Greenwich Village coffee bar.

Linderman trudges the New York streets with God, his dog, following Elsie with the vague idea of protecting her from the temptations of big-city life. Jack introduces her into his genteelly bohemian social circle where she swiftly proves an immense success. She leaves the introduction to *Queer* provides some indications.

The manuscript tails off after Lee and Allerton have made a trip to South America in search of the faded drug Yaga, which like some voodoo tincture can submit one person to

become increasingly obsessive and even sinister. He starts to harass Jack by letter, phone and personally in the street.

Highsmith's account of this process – all the more chilling for its restraint – is highly effective. It bears a startling resemblance to Saul Bellow's brilliant early novel, *The Victim*; and in case the reader has forgotten just how fine that book was, Jack provides a handy reminder, commending it to Elsie as part of her course of self-improvement: "that's the essence of Saul Bellow with its paranoia, you know? A masterpiece. Don't you think?" Highsmith is, one must assume, deliberately echoing *The Victim* in style as well as subject-matter. But where the persecution of Bellow's hero remains mysterious, the paranoia in Highsmith's novel is justified and the plot has a violent climax.

What is alarming about the characters in *Found in the Street* is not their bad motives but their good ones. Jack's care for his family and his selfless love for Elsie are based on impulses that he barely understands or controls; Ralph's scrupulous honesty becomes an obsessive and vindictive puritanism. Neither character behaves cruelly or dishonestly in the novel but by the time they come to suspect each other of committing the brutal climactic murder, Highsmith has convinced us that either of these decent men could be responsible.

Highsmith skillfully evokes the frantic minds of Jack and Ralph, the enticing, attractive bodies of Elsie and Jack's wife, Natalia, and the streets of New York. The book has its limitations, particularly in its treatment of all but the central four characters; it is a fine achievement all the same.

here was being together, eating cramped up from the draining-board near the sink. . . . This was real family life!" make this the most thoroughly convincing part of the book; no mock-gothic here, but real pain.

Ula's tenacious hopes for Christmas cheer are finally smashed when Maggie's brutal brother, Joe, appears; she dashes out into the snow, pursuing an ailing career. Ula's only comfort comes from a tin giraffe and the attentions of the warm-hearted, feckless Irish cook, Maggie.

Bruno's death results in a nervous breakdown for Nurse (observed with a sense of grim comedy) and Maggie and Ula are packed off for a "holiday" in Ireland. Neither Ireland nor Maggie turns out to be up to Ula's glowing expectations. Maggie's home is a poor and squalid, ruled over by a waspish Ma who criticizes Ula's previous life and escapes her own miseries by additively listening to the radio. The descriptions of the wretchedly poor little house, the nagging of mother and daughter, the moments of warmth that Ula hungrily man-ages to squeeze out ("what I liked best about

Everything not quite A-OK

Galen Strawson

JAY MCINERNEY

Ransom
280pp. Cape. £9.50.
0224023551

Jay McInerney's first novel, *Bright Lights, Big City* (1985), was about a young man in New York City. It was an impressive start: clever, fast and emotionally plausible, an intense, witty concatenation of drug-propelled incident ripped out in short sentences and the second-person singular ("Your eyelids feel as if they were being held open by taxidermy needles. You push on blindly. Your new watch dies at three-fifteen.") It had an underlying theme – the strange surface effects of an unconscious refusal to submit to the process of mourning for a dead parent – but it was essentially pitiless, picaresque, a weakly coupled series of single scenes, stylish add-ons and touching peripheries.

Ransom is, among other things, a bid for a strong plot. Like so many of the best phase-makers, McInerney is not a natural storyteller. He is an accumulator of moments, small-scale set pieces, and he has to work hard to provide a narrative vehicle for them.

He has worked hard. He has tried to write a "proper" novel. And, in a rather stiff and formal way, he has succeeded. Unlike *Bright Lights, Big City*, which just came to a stop, *Ransom* comes to an end. But his working shown – one can feel the effort, one notices the labour of construction.

Ransom is a person, a young American living in Kyoto in 1977. He earns his living by teaching English for the Honda A-OK Advertising Agency and English Language Conversation School in Osaka. Like the protagonist of *Bright Lights, Big City*, he is trying to deal with his past – the difference is that he knows it. He has two main problems. He is obsessed by the moral turpitude – so he sees it – of his father, a failed playwright and successful television director and producer. And he has submitted to the excruciating discipline of karate training in an attempt to break out of a "fevered daze" of pain and guilt whose principal cause is revealed in a series of sparse flashbacks to Landi Kotal, a town in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan, in 1975. Things went terribly wrong. He failed to pay a ransom. Love and loyalty left him with a death (or two) on his hands.

One feels that McInerney is as unlikely to make an error of fact, or indeed of tone, in his description of Japanese life as he is to relapse into gross cliché. His writing is clean and accurate, his lengthy descriptions of the karate *dojo* (training group) are accomplished. At first the anxious, emotionally fastidious Ransom seems like a character in fiction of reality. In time it comes to seem that this is not a failure of description, but part of the description. There is an odd, anachronistic emptiness about Ransom's inner life. But this is a property possessed by real people. Ransom is puzzled by his sense of honour, desperate for a quest, unable to complete the necessary work of mourning.

McInerney is good on the strangeness of being a Westerner in Japan, coldly amusing and acute about the Western cranks who have washed up there. The fragments of "undigested English" that appear on advertising billboards, shop fronts and shopping bags – "Let's Happy", "Your Beautiful Day", "Persistent Pursuit of Daintiness" – effectively deepen the sense of strangeness.

Many of these details feel rather dutiful, however. They are individually well done, but their inclusion is not sufficiently warranted by the demands of the plot. The book is not an organic growth; it is something less than life-like. And yet this is, in a way, an advantage. For it is precisely on account of its linguistic stiffness, its presentational formality, its partitioned character as narrative, that this carefully sifted novel accumulates authority as a characterization of a very trained young man pursuing abnegation in Japan. Towards the end the story tightens and picks up speed, Ransom's father turns up, reducing honour to farce; and then the whirligig of time does what it always does.

Lines of defence

David Nokes

WILLIAM MCCARTHY

Hester Thrale Piozzi: Portrait of a literary woman
306pp. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press; distributed in the UK by International Book Distributors. £28.
0 8078 1659 0

William McCarthy concludes this eloquent defence of Hester Thrale Piozzi by describing her as "one of the most eminent women writers in England before Jane Austen". Throughout the book he adopts the role of advocate, demonstrating a fierce partiality for a woman whose literary career confronted not only the familiar condescension incident to her sex, but more crucially the hostility of those for whom she appeared as the ungrateful reducer of her mentor, Johnson. Boswell set the tone for such criticism when he found himself "obliged to animadvert on the inaccuracies" of her *Anecdotes*, accusing her of exaggeration, distortion and of a habit of representing Johnson as "extremely deficient in affection, tenderness, or even common civility". In our own century, Walter Raleigh dismissed her as a "feather-brained" woman whose "code of truth is not severe". By the citation of such judgments as these, McCarthy succeeds in representing her as a consistent victim of male disparagement and neglect.

He is particularly effective in detailing the trials of her private life. At the age of twenty-two she was obliged by family pressures to accept marriage to the "blockhead" brewer Henry Thrale, a man so unromantic that "he never had thrown five minutes of his time away" in private conversation with his bride "even till after our wedding day was done!" Thereafter, married life was an unbroken sequence of pregnancies, births and miscarriages. The "pleasures" of her marriage, she wrote mordantly long afterwards, "consisted in holding my head over a basin six months in the year". This, as McCarthy presents it, was the domestic reality behind the "brilliant stage

performance" of the fashionable salon at Streatham.

Long accustomed to condescension, she became defensive about her own talents. In a rating system which she devised in *Thraliana* she gave the Bluestocking leader Elizabeth Montagu a score of 101, while estimating her own score at 76. Above all, both as a woman and a writer, she felt a compulsion to free herself from the overpowering influence of Johnson. Her mind, she wrote, was "swallowed up and lost" in his. Her famous letter of rebuke to him, after his attack on her "ignominious" marriage to Piozzi, has the same significance in her life as Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield has in his. As a declaration of independence it is both spirited and dignified, claiming the right of a woman "of superior understanding" to exercise her own free choice. Yet it was only after Johnson's death that she felt liberated to write. "While Johnson lived whatever I wrote would have been attributed to him & I could not turn author." Even then, as McCarthy shows, a certain subconscious desire to compete with her mentor seems to have influenced her choice of subjects, and her ventures into lexicography, history and politics indicate a lingering strain of both personal and authorial rivalry. McCarthy rejects the sado-masochistic, "manacles and whips" image of their relationship; instead he offers a largely convincing portrait of a curious interdependence in which she served him as a surrogate mother, while he became a father-figure to her. And, despite McCarthy's endeavours to recommend the full range of Mrs Thrale's writings, it is upon her *Anecdotes of Johnson* that her literary reputation still largely depends. They offer, as she said, a "candle-light picture" of Johnson, flashes of insight alternating with shadows of doubt and melodrama. When, for example, she observes that the "vacuity of life" became a "favourite bypo-

Even-tempered addenda

Humphrey Carpenter

RUPERT HART-DAVIS (Editor)

More Letters of Oscar Wilde
215pp. John Murray. £12.50.
01795 41743

Sir Rupert Hart-Davis, who edited *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* twenty-four years ago, explains disarmingly in his introduction to this new volume that it is simply a collection of items which have turned up since then. More (he adds) will undoubtedly surface, but "it seems sensible to print this lot while I am still here to do it". Quite so, and he has done a deft and often entertaining job of editing. But most of the letters in the new book actually deserve the prominence of a separate volume, and would have been better absorbed into a new edition of the *Letters*, or at least the *Selected Letters* (an Oxford paperback, still in print).

More *Letters* is not without its gems. We have Wilde conducting the opening moves of an affair with a Cambridge undergraduate: "My dear Harry, . . . I wonder are you all as

cold in Cambridge as we are. I love the languor of hot noons . . . Send me a photograph of yourself . . . What is Harry doing? Is he reading Shelley to a land of moonbeams and mystery?" And on the American tour: "I am among canyons and coyotes: one is a sort of fox and the other a deep ravine. I don't know which is which." But delights like this tend to emphasize the comparative barrenness of the greater part of the book. The *Wilde of More Letters* is chiefly a cool-headed man of business, a professional author rather than a performing aesthete, and while this no doubt contributes a few bricks to the edifice of our knowledge of the man, it seems a rather unspectacular addition.

What impresses most in the book is his courtesy and evenness of temper, even when he had been abominably treated by others. This comes out particularly in the letters written in exile after his release from prison. On one occasion he tells his publisher, Leonard Smithers, who had failed to send some promised and desperately needed money: "I have had no money. I hope you had a good one." But such reproaches rarely creep in. Even

when Frank Harris lets him down disastrously, stealing the plot of a play and failing to hand over an agreed sum despite the fact that Wilde had already given him a receipt for it, Wilde's letter to Harris is in a tone rather of sorrow than anger, and is virtually confined to a bare statement of the facts.

One letter from the years of exile suggests repentance of a sort: "I feel that while there is much that I have lost; still there was much that was not worth keeping. I am more of a realist, a moralist than before, but I am sure that my life was once quite unworthy of its name. In its deliberate and studied materialism, its sober toke really dominates the book. It is scarcely presents a balanced picture of Wilde. And while Hart-Davis says he has omitted "vital notes" and printed only "interesting ones", the quantity of short business letters in the last part of the book suggests that this criterion has not always been rigidly applied.

Beatrice Potter's Journal (317pp. Warner, £10.00) is an abridgement, introduced by Glen Cavillero, of *The Journal of Beatrice Potter* (reviewed in the *TLS* July 21, 1985).

Real family life

Carol Rumens

URSULA HOLDEN

The Toys
132pp. Methuen. £8.95.
0413640500

Ula is in the Jane Byre mould of outsider-children: unloved, plaited (at six years old she has patches of grey in her hair and "dingy teeth"), precociously intelligent and destined to triumph over her appalling circumstances. All the events in Ursula Holden's new novel are transmitted through her consciousness, and though, as we learn on the final page, these events are being remembered by a more mature character, there are few adult perspectives; immediacy is all.

The candour and sharpness of the child's responses give life to the novel, even in its most conventional gothic aspects. We first meet Ula at a dancing class, the teacher urges her little pupils to "dance their feelings", but Ula

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Cat and mouse in Wildwood

Paul Duguid

WILLIAM WHARTON
Pride
288pp. Cape. £9.95.
0224 02362

Admirers of William Wharton's earlier novels (which include *Birdy* and *Dad*) will be glad to see in *Pride* the author's microscopic gaze once again focused, as if in scientific study, on a small, almost closed circle of characters. The Kettlestons, Dick Sr, Laura, Laurel, and Dickie Jr, are as tightly knit as their names suggest. They come, Dickie tells us in his first-person narrative, from Stonehurst Hills, Pennsylvania, where they have survived, through pride and hard work, the Depression and the loss of Dick's job with J.F. But when J.F. takes back laid-off workers, Dick joins the new union, and as a result "company goons" drive the family, at least temporarily, to Wildwood, New Jersey. All cares are forgotten in an idyllic week on the Jersey shore until Dickie, attempting to show his cat Cannibal to a caged lion on the pier, unintentionally allows the lion to escape. Tuffy, the lion, who is used in a well-of-death motorcycle act, kills Jimmy, one of the motorcycleists, and finally has to be shot.

This is not, in the abstract, a compelling story: none of Wharton's stories is, when stripped of its author's hypnotic style of narration. Nor, more surprisingly, is it the only story. For unlike the previous books, *Pride* has a second and distinct narrative: that of Dickie and Cannibal is accompanied by the story of Tuffy and its owner, Cap.

Sture "Cap" Modig grows up on a farm in Wisconsin, is badly wounded in the First World War, and finds a job in Detroit that leads him into motor-racing – until he crashes as a result

of worrying about the lion cub he has bought. A second career in carnival ends with his driving motorcycles, and Tuffy, around the Wildwood wall of death. It is he who, with the help of Sammy, the human fish, recaptures Tuffy, and it is he who must shoot him.

Although a parallel tale is a departure from the usual tightness of Wharton's stories it might, perhaps, have been expected. In *Dad* and *Birdy* he was much concerned with contrasting pairs (father-son, man-beast, man-machine, individual responsibility-uncontrollable events); he now heightens the device by yoking together two similar stories. But though Wharton has the ability to provide detailed observations of a small group, it is not ample enough to accommodate a second group. There are two distinct narrative techniques – the Kettleston story in the first person, Cap's story in the third. When the two tales are drawn together the touch is particularly unsure, and when they finally merge the sense of contrivance is strong.

The earlier books were seamless; here we see not only obtrusive seams but flaws in the weave. Apart from the two narrative voices, the author himself intrudes directly and clumsily, first in the preface ("On October 6, 1938 in Wildwood New Jersey, a lion, part of a 'Wall of Death' motorcycle act, escaped from his cage on the board walk and killed a man. . . . This novel, despite the factual reality of the original tragedy, is work of fiction") and then in a ten-page chapter on the Life of the Lion ("Because Tuffy is a major character in our tale, perhaps it would be best if we consider briefly the life he might have lived if he had not been taken at such an early age from his home environment.")

Once the reader begins to feel the artificiality, the novel seems to descend rapidly into heavy-handed allegory of the sort *Birdy* re-

sisted so well. By the time Dickie and Cannibal and Cap and Tuffy are all in Wildwood, moral fables have sprouted everywhere. Cannibal, who is in fact responsible for releasing the lion from captivity, "really looks like a mouse" as the deed is done. Whereas Jimmy, who is eaten by Tuffy, tended to put spikes into rather than remove them from the lion. And Dick Sr, disappointingly unlike the eponymous Dad of Wharton's earlier novel, intones to a penitent Dickie:

You remember this. Nobody can let anybody else, not even a lion, out of his cage.

The important thing for all of us is never to look at the bars, look through them. Because if you keep looking at bars, you'll never get anything done, and

With the vets in Hopewell

Anne Boston

ROBBIE ANN MASON
In Country
247pp. Chatto and Windus. £9.95.
07011 30342

It was the summer of the Michael Jackson *Victory* tour and the Bruce Springsteen *Born in the USA* tour, neither of which Sam got to go to. At her graduation, the commencement speaker, a Methodist minister, had preached about keeping the country strong, stressing sacrifice. He made Sam nervous. She started thinking about war, and it stayed on her mind all summer.

Sam is Samantha, seventeen, sassy, and enough to make anyone who lived through the 1960s feel ancient. The war she is too young to remember is the Vietnam war, which killed her father before she was born, and left her uncle Emmett a permanent drop-out suffering from horrendous scars which might or might not be the result of exposure to Agent Orange. Left alone to feel responsible for Emmett since her mother remarried and moved away, Sam realizes that her life has been as inexorably shaped as the lives of her parents' generation by those events far away and long ago.

Dwayne came back from Vietnam in a sealed coffin, but she noses out nuggets of information about him from Emmett and his buddies, all veterans scarred physically or mentally by the experience. She falls in love with one of them, to discover that he is unmened like Hemingway's Jake (symbolism a little heavy-handed here). Even while agonizing over him, she is perspicacious enough to see that his attraction was part of her fruitless attempt to get to know her father. The idealization is finally shattered by the rather unlikely event of her grandparents' innocently lending her Dwayne's deeply disturbing Vietnam diary to read. The brief, clumsy entries reveal a humorless boy, made callous and brutal by war, who hardly knew Sam's mother.

Emmett, Dwayne, Earl, Dawn: the names

you'll never have any fun in life, any joy. Do you understand?

By now the reader understands all too well. The firmness of the first half of the book – the trials of the Depression, the torture of Cap's gassing in the war – has been washed out in a flood of sentimentality. Dick Sr rides the waves, all father as he builds palatial sandcastles, all man as Hemingway-like he encounters a stingray on a fishing line, and near-appearance as he saves his children from the lion. "I've got to keep that merry-go-round going round. So long as it's moving I think the kids are safe." Most readers would more willingly face Wharton's lion than submit further to the superficial gaudy of the merry-go-round.

twang like Country and Western guitar chords through this affecting, unpatronizing evocation of small-town Hopewell, where most of the folk take their style from the God-fearing or the sexy, and sophistication is a visit to the shopping mall in nearby Lexington. A few years ago England imported the label "arty realism" along with Raymond Carver's pared-down stories; this year Robbie Ann Mason's brand of rural nostalgia brings us "lick dick". Her preoccupation with authenticity does the pages with the titles of television programmes, brand names of drinks and above all references to records. Major events past and present are dated by their rock-and-roll associations: Chuck Berry, the Beatles, Little Richard (the best legacy of that much overrated era) are the bridge between Sam and her parents' generation. As one of the vets says wistfully in her at the commemoration dance, "When you're in country, there's so little connection to the World, but those songs – that's as close as we came to a real connection."

Mason's deadpan, unornamented prose and faultless dialogue are well tuned to pick out the limitations of the place and people Sam belongs to, even as she knows she is growing out of them: the "mating run" between McDonnell and the Burger King, where the boys cruise after the girls; Sam's best friend Dawn, pregnant and tied for good to Hopewell; her grandparents' blinding on about the tobacco crop; even the emily wald Emmett, who can only "work on staying together, one day at a time".

The author is herself of the "Vietnam generation"; in her effort to exorcise those troubled years she perhaps over-emphasizes them in Sam's obsession. But the finale of Emmett and Sam's visit to the Washington war memorial with Sam's grandmother Marnie is redemptive. The balance. The picture of Marnie, not so far and leaning precariously on a borrowed painter's ladder to touch the inscription of Dwayne's name, is a finely balanced moment of comedy, pathos and understated emotion.

crackers for the duration.

Joe Crabbe was a submariner in the Navy, one of those "hyenas, whose job it is to rip out the soft underbelly of the elephants and spit their guts into the sea". It is no wonder that his victims experience abandonment vicariously.

And Crabbe is carefully named. An emotional scavenger who can face nothing head-on, he scuttles sideways through life in a semi-drunk state. With river mud pressed on his "like a protective shell", he occasionally brings Gregor Samsa to mind. By devoting his lower form of life he attempts to shed the sense of being human – as father, husband or friend. He loves his submarine – "Ambush, stealth, viciousness, surprise, each becomes a depth, Edwards is too often surface-bound in his confessional style, feelings are always left not revealed for lack of evidence the reader experiences a corresponding lack of sympathy. In this short novel Edwards dips into abandonment, divorce, adolescence, abandonment and the difficulty of sharing. But the water is dark and cold, and like the Kid he can only jump in and out.

Bad lad himself

Alan Coren

FREDDIE HANCOCK and DAVID NATHAN
Hancock
200pp. Ariel/BBC. Paperback, £2.95.
0563 204613
RAY GALTON and ALAN SIMPSON
The Best of Hancock
168pp. Robson. £7.50.
08661 367 X

There were two Hancocks. One was built by Jack and Lily Hancock of Birmingham in 1924; the other was built by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson of the BBC in 1954. The latter was as unquestionably the best of Hancock as the former was the worst. These two books are therefore not a biography on the one hand and a collection of scripts on the other; they are two biographies, two presentations of distinctly different human beings. Galton and Simpson did not write self-hour playlets into which a comic actor stepped, in order to fulfil a dramatic function; they manufactured a persona who exposed weekly half-hours of his life.

The born version was called Anthony John Hancock, the fabricated version was called Anthony Aloysius St John Hancock; and nothing, perhaps, encapsulates the difference between them more than the handful of artificial additives. They summarize not only the pretension, the veinglory, the pomposity, the aspiration and the priggishness of the Galton-Simpson *Doppelgänger*, but – in the divine silliness of the chosen syllables – the vulnerability to ridicule that made the fictional characteristics simultaneously pitiable and hilarious. Every time, and there were many, that Anthony Aloysius St John Hancock proudly enunciated his name to some official or other, some new girlfriend, some social superior, some potential associate in this crackpot business venture or that, the instant self-definition of his persona carried away its basic swiftness on a single puff of comic sympathy. He was a loser, and because of that, he was loved.

Plain Anthony John Hancock, however, had

Propriety undimmed

Craig Brown

KEITH WATERHOUSE
The Collected Letters of a Nobody: Including Mr Pooter's advice to his son
190pp. Michael Joseph. £9.95.
07181 25495

In his one and only letter to a fellow-author in this recently discovered batch, Mr Charles Pooter advises Jerome K. Jerome, "as one who is very familiar with your works", not to go ahead with the account of a boating holiday he has been contemplating publishing. "The boating craze will soon be over", he asserts, concluding, "stick to what you are best at, Mr Jerome – give us some more ghost stories: there is always a demand for them."

Mr Pooter may not have been right about everything, but it could never be said of him that he did not make the effort. In matters social and moral he was forever determined to maintain his position; that those around him – tradesmen, neighbours, manufacturers of faulty goods, his feckless son Lupin – offered him scant support in this lifelong task was no fault of his. There may have been those who, on hearing of Keith Waterhouse's discovery of these letters in a trunk in the loft of The Larches, Brickfield Terrace, Holloway, were nervous lest they reflect badly on Mr Pooter's reputation as a man who always strove to do his best. So often the posthumously published letters of an author reveal improprieties damaging to a reputation. Happily, Mr Pooter's letters, lovingly edited by Mr Waterhouse, further convince the reader of his basic rectitude. Many of these letters are alluded to in the Diary, particularly those of a "satiric" bent. The sense of humour hinted at in the Diary is paraded gloriously in the letters: puns (particularly those inspired by surnames) abound; and are awarded greater emphasis by generous deployment of the exclamation mark. Sometimes, inevitably, the sense of humour mingles

all the awfulness, and little of the redeeming vulnerability. He was beyond question a loser, but his losses were brought about not so much by his weaknesses as by the misuse of his strengths; furthermore, any pity we might be persuaded to feel for his self-destruction is pre-empted by the self-pity which constantly accompanied it.

Worse, the fabricated Hancock wrought havoc only on himself; the born Hancock wrecked the lives of others. An egomaniacal bully whose selfish unscrupulousness encouraged him to use his colleagues, friends and lovers with a careless cruelty, he seems to have employed the hackneyed excuse of genius to exculpate himself from any responsibility in the wanton damage he spread. Quite literally, with both hands: when, in a rage, he broke the nose of his second wife (the incredibly forgiving co-author of the biography *Hancock*), he could hardly wait for her to emerge from hospital before clouting her again so brutally as to rupture her eardrum. Not surprisingly, the women in his life seem to have been constantly swilling down vast quantities of booze and beriberis, either to keep up with him, or permanently to get away from him. I lost count of the number of times poor Mrs Hancock attempted suicide.

Professionally, he was as self-centred as he was self-deluding. Pursued by global ambitions which – to even the most uncritical admirer of his East Cheam triumphs – were quite preposterous, he jettisoned everyone who contributed to his domestic success on the grounds that his genius was being circumscribed by their association. The last to be got rid of were Galton and Simpson, and this final idiotic coup was the end of him. Without them, his act degenerated into a rag-bag of twenty-year-old Windmill gags and impressions of stars long dead. Interestingly, those parodies he most doggedly clung to were Charles Laughton and Robert Newton, both self-destructive misfits in an exactly similar mould. The biography is thus a grisly and dispiriting read. Henceforth, I for one shall find it difficult to watch Anthony Aloysius without seeing the shadow cast by Anthony John.

fires. Having made a jest to Mr Spellman ("Forgive me if I have mis-spelled your name (I!)") on the surname of a Mr Steam, Pooter is obliged in a subsequent letter to withdraw the pun ("I was not to know that he was in mourning for his sister"). As Mr Waterhouse observes in his exquisitely judged commentary, "while appreciative of his own flair for sustained irony, he often failed to recognize the quality in others", and certainly Mr Pooter is quick to take offence at affronts to his dignity; but Mr Waterhouse wisely understands that it is for Pooter's frailties as much as for his aspirations that he has come to be held in such affection.

The collection is subtitled "Including Mr Pooter's advice to his son". It must be admitted that much of the poignancy of the book lies in the fact that the larger amount of this advice goes unheeded. Lupin Pooter seems to have little regard for the Victorian values of thrift, delicacy, industry, promptitude or sobriety; against his father's wishes, he is a willing herald for a new age of ostentatious jollity, blunt talk and informality. As his father tries unsuccessfully to pull him back from the brink of debauchery ("I had meant to have a man-to-man talk with you on the topic the night before you left for Oldham, but I had to leaguer my pipe-rack"), the young Pooter loafs uncaringly onwards.

So recently published, the letters fill the reader with sadness as well as humour: no more do we holiday in 137 Cadet Barracks Road, South Morecambe; no more do we treasure our Be-zee-kopi jellygraph devices; no more do we read picture postcards of an ornamental drinks fountain in the middle of Peckham High Street; no more do we see the letters pages of *Exchange and Mart* as a fitting forum for our views on current affairs. How upsetting it is, too, to learn that Charles Pooter died in 1908, his wife Carrie predeceasing him by a year. Somehow one had imagined that he was still alive, still busy about his untended existence, somewhere small in England.



One of the twenty black-and-white photographs in *The Best of Hancock*.

Passions in Provence

Lesley Chamberlain

ROSALIND BRACKENBURY
Crossing the Water
211pp. Brighton: Harvester. £8.95.
07108 10032

Rosalind Brackenbury's latest essay in feminine consciousness is an attempt to reach the imagination of the male and bring the sexes closer to *entente*. A married English woman slowly embarks on an affair with a married French sculptor. We are asked to believe that "the daring and discouragement involved in being female" are revealed as she crosses the English Channel and the man-woman gulf, leaving behind her limited former self and discovering the world afresh.

The discouragement seems to be biological, the daring something to do with breaking the rules of silence and discretion. Brackenbury's story moves slowly, as if through a continuous series of film stills, and weaves a vision not far removed in appeal from the chocolate-box feminine – her narrator sees an idyllic Provencal cottage, children on tricycles, herbs in the salad, flowers in the garden, the weather, painting, and dogs. The leak soup is thick and creamy, the potatoes all have individual shapes. There are an awful lot of cats too across the water, as well as crumpled sheets and crumbs on the breakfast table, hot sun and high trampoline, and a novel named *Desire*. (He makes a present of this to his wife in her presence; forbidden public tears, and the only black passage in the book, follow.)

The sense-impressions pile up, to vivid but questionable effect. Meanwhile the pervasive present tense, and the recurring duplication of experience; the repeated expression of the same feeling in other words, like this, suggest that such things as soup represent the eternal mystery of life and that some search for precision is involved in pinning them down.

The novel offers a charismatic example of one quality of a feminine vision, the ability to see everything from the beauty of the new season to the impending emptiness of the corn-flakes packet and the child's bleeding knee, the

sort of things to which men often seem irritatingly blind. But we have no opportunity to compare the visions, his and hers, in the book. Rosalind Brackenbury eschews character, dialogue and conscience, and thus eschews all sense of self.

Despite her pleasures the narrator is a disembodied woman, struggling to find an identity by recording each sensation. She knows that one obstacle to her Anglo-Saxon self-realization is fear of continental feminine elegance – the long limbs, soft Italian high-heeled shoes, spiky fingernails and delicate bones of the wife she betrays. Another problem is the lust she is acutely aware of while drinking alone. Beside these discoveries her snobbish worship of France looks like self-delusion; but may not be so intended, for it has a parallel in the uncritical love of men which Ms Brackenbury's heroine is not about to renounce.

Convalescence in Colorado

Isabel Fonseca

PAGE EDWARDS
The Lake: Father and Son
144pp. Marion Boyars. £9.95.
0 7145 2834 X

Instead of "Father and Son", *The Lake* might have been subtitled "Love is a floating fly-line". Page Edwards's fourth novel is soddied with aquatic imagery. Woman is a fish on a line (or a rubber duck), man is a submarine, courtship is "sinking a sub in a war game", marriage is a hand tub and "we are all as vulnerable as a fleet". Bedraggled by the marine motif, one family's sad story emerges in two parallel, not entirely compatible accounts.

Chapters of Dad's ruminations on his failed marriage to the brittle Rebecca alternate with his son's recollections, dictated into a tape recorder. The Kid and Page Edwards think the recording device will offer easy access to difficult emotions; but it proves awkward for both, something to be overcome every other chapter.

Convalescing from an ulcer caused by chills and repression, the boy recalls their holiday in a cabin on a Colorado lake. While Dad guzzles lakefish of bourbon, Son is getting up to something suitably wholesome: doing the washing up, roasting hot dogs on the camp fire, shooting Dad in the leg. Heaven for this liver-bellied freckle-faced fourteen-year-old is a "turkey sandwich on Wonder bread". But for the Kid – an anemic all-American pastiche of his hero Huck Finn and Holden Caulfield ("Dad kills me sometimes") – life has not been a picnic. The boy's constitutional disappointment is less interesting as a study of adolescent angst than as a reflection of the corrosive power of the father who is the real subject of the novel. The chapters devoted to the latter contain Edwards's best writing.

Joe Crabbe (aka Dad) makes his loved ones sick to their stomachs. Man, and in turn wife, are repelled when she tells him she is with Kid. As her midlife expands, so does the distance between them. Junior (whose entrance into the world was as welcome as a descending depth charge) is doubled over from the delight of a few days with Dad, and reduced to milk and

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Remainders

Eric Korn

In the last few days of the Greater London Council, one wing of one of London's palaces was humed down and two museums, the Victoria and Albert and the British Museum, were flooded by the bursting of water mains. In each case the damage was less than had been feared, we were told. It would be whimsical, superstitious, or as we too often say now, paranoid, to seek or find any occult, cabalistic, symbolic or causal connection. None was under the GLC's management; the causes are in no wise attributable to, or symptomatic of, poor maintenance, inadequate funding, structural decay, official indifference, or the healthy belief that problems like poverty cannot be got rid of just by throwing money at them.

Yes. And under the matt black skin of Halley's core, the latest telescopic photometric data, bringing unexpected insights into the composition of other heavenly bodies including our own moon, have revealed the presence not merely of simple hydrocarbons but more complex organic molecules, including quantities of vinifolent casein protein particles. Or green cheese.

I was in the British Library the other evening to study the less obscure works of Pascal Beverly Randolph, the Madagascan Rosicrucian erotologist, only to find that there are no evening deliveries from the stacks any more. Serious scholars, A. Spokefellow hinted to me, should be prepared to make sacrifices for their research, like joining the London Library. While it was not true that the entire Library was to be sold to McGraw Hill, or access to the catalogue to be metered and charged for, the Government could not definitely subsidize the whimsical enquiries of dilettantes like my goodself, or carry, in times of financial stringency, duplicate copies of obscure old books whose disposal would encourage the regions, simplify cataloguing, improve access to the remaining hooks, and liberate funds to enable those in real need to be helped, by the provision of incentives to the charitably minded private sector.

I've got this great story outline here. Action, romance, local colour, drama, suspense,

The periodicals: *Descant*

T. J. Binyon

Descant
No 51, Winter 1985-86: "The Culture of Crime"
244pp, 26. Available from PO Box 314, Station P, Toronto, Canada M5S 2S8.

This issue of the Canadian journal *Descant*, subtitled "The Culture of Crime", gets off on the wrong foot when the editor Karen Mulhally begins her preface by quoting Alice, after reading "Jahberwocky": "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas - only I don't know exactly what they are! However, *somebody* killed *something*; that's clear, at any rate." And adds: "So Alice in the Looking-Glass House provides us with the essential elements of all tales of detection: *somebody* killed *something*." Laurence Block has written a detective story about the murder of 200 tropical fish, but in general the essential element in a tale of detection is that *somebody* has killed *someone*, and Alice's words are an attempt at exegesis, not detection. The confusion is characteristic; there is little attempt, in the issue as a whole, to come to terms with crime or crime fiction, and detection is more often used as metaphor than as a subject.

More orthodox are a lecture from Borges - annoyingly undated - concerned mainly with Poe, a sensible plug for the mystery story by Howard Engel (creator of private eye Benny Cooperman), and Ted Coonsen's tantalizingly brief introduction to Japanese detective fiction, whose first and best practitioners adopted the pen-name of Edogawa Ranpo in homage

mayhem, and lashings of sex. Make a great movie. Great play too.

Not entirely original. I was helped by *The Secret History of Mack-beth King of Scotland taken from a very ancient Manuscript*, published by James Woodward in 1708. (Public domain, too.) It is sometimes found with *Memoirs of the Court of Scotland*, purportedly by Hypolitus, Earl of Douglas, actually by the writer of fairy tales, Madame la Comtesse d'Aulnoy: one catalogue attributes *Mack-beth* to her.

"Eric and his beloved Bertha forsook their Downy-Bed and took an agreeable walk on the beach of the sea not far from the mouth of the River Luna in Lancashire." While they were listening to the rowling surges of the sea, and heightening their present felicity by remembrance of their past evil fortune, a storm came up suddenly, dashed a passing frail hysque upon some hidden rocks, and then abated, whereupon Eric and Bertha and two local hermits hurried to the shore to discover there three seemingly lifeless forms. The forms were the young Thane of Lorn, it transpired, and the fair Eugenia and her father, Thane of Argyle. "Hal!" exclaimed one hermit, drawing a dirk. "It is he. It is that villain, that Devil Incarnate. Look on me, Angus, know Glamis." Eric and the other hermit separate them; a remorseful Angus launches into his *skoz*.

Angus and Mack-beth were old comrades at court, Mack-beth a prince of royal blood, Angus an upwardly-mobile gofer. The two chums fell simultaneously for the dishy daughters of Broad-Albaio, Jaquenetta and Annabella, wives respectively to the Thanes of Gaur and Kyle.

Angus, coming from Jaquenetta's bedroom, extricates Mack-beth from an ambush by ruffians in the service of Calthness, a rival in love and politics; in return, Mack-beth treats him to a stirring resumé of his amour, apparently scripted by John Cleland: "White, Firm, and Round," he reminisces, "and has'd with an agreeable motion"; but scarcely had he got into possession of this inestimable Treasure (Mack-beth's phrase, not mine) when the husband was heard in the next room. He managed to hide under the bed (barely) when Kyle entered, took one look at the heaving roundness sod made ready to indulge the Walcome Vigour (the Thane of Kyle's phrase, not Mack-beth's). No sooner was the sated Thane off the premises than Annabella leapt into a neat Bath strewn with sweet Herbs to make Purgation (Annabella's phrase), whither Mack-beth had

followed her, turning a pretty compliment about her sexual ingenuity.

Calthness, disgruntled by the failure of the ambush, shops Mack-beth and Annabella to Kyle, but is thwarted by the fearless fibbing of Annabella's maid.

Calthness slinks away, muttering about the contumacious Impotence of age having the Vanity to think itself sufficient for so much Youth, a phrase which not unnaturally gets up Kyle's nose; he thereafter keeps suspicious watch, and does eventually surprise the lovers, but is himself so surprised by one of the foot-stools with which the pragmatic Annabella has booby-trapped her chamber that he stumbles, falls comatose, and vanishes from the plot, as indeed does Annabella, her lusty but inconsistent lover having tired of her and fallen for the daughter of Ross, the future Lady M., a smart move politically if less savvy as far as the intimate side of things is concerned, his bride being a "Woman that took so little delight in Conjugal Embraces that she had an utter Aversion to Man in that particular", in consequence of which Mack-beth goes off to suppress Macdusid and the rebellious Western Islanders, who are followed into defeat by the King of Norway whose entire army Angus (who, as the more alert among you will recall, is narrating all this) poisons with a "soporiferous drug, common in Scotland". Tired by his vigorous activity, Mack-beth falls asleep in a shady arbour, and dreams of three women, faces shining with celestial glory, who greet him as Thane of Angus, Thane of Murray, King of Scotland. ("I know very well, that there is a story spread abroad that he met three witches in a forest, who visibly and by daylight gave him these salutations, but I had it from his own Mouth long before.")

Mack-beth and his side-kick Bancho take counsel, decide to dethrone King Duncan (that's what it says); Duncan is Sanctioned by Bancho's mob *en route* to Inverness and Mack-beth is elected to succeed him.

Mack-beth is a popular and wise King for five years. Unsexed Queen turns Mack-beth on by displaying naked Inetta, half-sister to Bancho (who has been told by some gypsies that his posterity will rule). Mack-beth solicits Bancho's help in debauching sister, offers Lady Mack-beth in return. Bancho enters Queen's bed and is immediately stabbed to death and accused of attempted rape ("he answered nothing and proceeded to Rudeness"); Mack-beth drugs and rapes Inatta, and then the female Scots nobility in general; ha'd

have had Eugenia too, if I hadn't inconveniently clambered down a rope and fled with her to England and shipwreck, as you, Glamis, did earlier, taking with me her sweetheart the young Thane of Lorn, him there, whose aged father, I can now reveal, is not dead but safe, End of *skoz*. Glamis, Lorn, Eugenia, all delighted; messenger arrives from English Court, urging everyone to set out for Dunainne right away, which they do, passing by Bertram Wood, "with Green Boughs all in their hats as in Triumph for bloodless Coquette". Mack-beth, deserted, is quickly dispatched; his Queen is "fouled to have died earlier, after walking about the castle with eyes shut talking to herself"; after an extended sermon on Constitutional Monarchy Malcolm is left in charge. Scholars may know which bits of this cock-a-leekie are original, which from Holinshed (whence came Baquo's complicity and the graciousness of the three sisters, though they hail Macbeth as successively Cromarty, Moray, Angus), which, if so, from Hector Boece or Wyntoun or the *Bulk of the Cronicle*. I just want the paperback rights.

The BL has posted a list of the shelf-marks of flood-damaged books, not to be visited, if at all, till they are out of intensive care. Among the alphabet soup nestled our old friend PC, the Private Case. Have all the Library's curios been washed away? Has that covetable stock of salacity been destroyed by some censorious God, some delicate-minded water nymph, or most sinister thought, deliberately instigated by some gang of clean-living terrorists? From burning page three to drowning de Sade's but a step.

"I couldn't help notice the beautiful English people spoke when I was in Dhaka recently (many of them had MA's in Eog Lit too and quoted Donne or Boerwolf at the drop of a hat." (Neeloo's Diary, *New Life*, 4/4/86.)

The image of saucy pedantic Bangladeshi cursing the unruly sun whenever they doff their headgear is attractive; but what do they see in Boerwolf, that gloomily alliterative Afrikaans epic about the scotching of the wicked monster that threatens Bothar's hell, fire-torot, and the vengeance of the yet more fearsome Winifred Grendela?

FIFTY YEARS ON

The TLS of April 18, 1936 carried a review by D. L. Murray of *The Good New Days* by Morjorie and C. H. B. Quennell, from which the following passages are taken:

Englishmen abroad have in their minds' eyes a definite vision of England - the England they left twenty or thirty years ago. They see a land of thatched or tiled cottages nestling among small fields, surrounded by small gardens; they see great estates with lodges and gates and long carriage drives bordered by stately trees; they see, if they come from the North, large tracts of land given over to row after row of hideous streets surrounding mills and factories and collieries belching smoke and grime; they see small farms with horse teams ploughing, barn-door fowls scratching on the mildewed, pigstyes cheek by jowl with the dwelling house, and a few inarticulate men and women working all hours of daylight and tumbling into bed at night with no thought of anything outside the life of the farm and the village. Distance has softened any ugliness - and there were not many in that England of their youth.

If the wanderer takes a motor drive through this England of dreams the week he arrives home he would be well advised to carry as guide-book "The Good New Days" by Morjorie and C. H. B. Quennell. It would point the way to much that is new in England today. He will see, for instance, that England's face has changed; at the thatched door he is likely to see an expensive car standing to take its owner back to town from his weekend retreat; in the grounds of the great house he will probably see school children playing, hotel guests disporting themselves under the limelight of cinema or hos-

pital patients with their nurses. In the North he will come across great areas with never a plume of the defiling smoke that is the breath of life or industry as he knew it in the little village shop. If he runs short of cigarettes and tries to buy a packet, he will probably be told that those in the window are only dummies - every one out of work; cigarettes are in such little demand that they are scarcely stocked at all now. On the farms he will see strange machinery reminiscent of a Wellsian dream of the future he will see, too, on the farms a great deal of reinforced concrete and corrugated iron, and still more creosoted match-boardings; he will hear the hum of a dynamo instead of the hum of milk from the hyre, and the poultry will be confined in neat wire.

But perhaps it is in the social habits of the present day that the greatest changes have taken place. There has been a steady march out of the home among the moneyed and highly-salaried classes. Working people, where they can get good housing conditions and a little land, have tended, on the contrary, to stick more closely to home.

When our exiles left home in the early years of the century he was grumbling at his income tax of 1s. in the £! The new England will disappoint him at first; having read and shuddered at the lack of privacy in Soviet Russia, and having been brought up with a sturdy British passion for his own privacy, he will be amazed at the prying into his private affairs by Government officials, and at first he may fall foul of them; he will surprise him to find that he is not taken at his word, and he will be astonished to find that his social position entails very little privacy nowadays.

Letters

Robbins and After

Sir, - There is a bewildering amount of historical revision going on: first, Correll Barnett's indictment of the Beveridge utopia in *The Age of War*; now Lord Anson's magisterial review of John Carswell's account of the rise and fall of the Robbins principle (April 11); what next?

So, that wonderful dream we all shared - including Noel Annan. I presume; I certainly don't recall his saying anything like this at the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, on which I sat as Acting Vice-Chancellor at East Anglia - was quite simply *too expensive*. Why weren't we told? How many of us, now approaching fifty would have entered university teaching, convinced in those heady leekie are original, which from Holinshed (whence came Baquo's complicity and the graciousness of the three sisters, though they hail Macbeth as successively Cromarty, Moray, Angus), which, if so, from Hector Boece or Wyntoun or the *Bulk of the Cronicle*. I just want the paperback rights.

Anson benefits of course from hindsight, which makes all men wise. But I have to remind him that although some of us did indeed feel the pressures to expand the university system. I still recall with some bitterness the hours wasted at my institution looking at "models" for threefold growth in student numbers in as many years. The pressures came not from us, but from our paymasters. What price those blueprints now? Much less than Alhambra railway shares, which you can at least fence and bog on the landing.

Those paymasters now manage to imply that the ensuing debacle was somehow all the fault of the dons: they were too greedy, too power-hungry, too status-conscious to stop milking the uncomplaining public cow. But it simply wasn't like that. We were cajoled into taking more students, setting up more courses, making more appointments over a shorter time-scale than we knew was wise. It saddens me that those who have now bobbed the horse they kicked into a gallop a few short years ago will draw comfort from your distinguished reviewer's implied endorsement of their propaganda.

JOHN FLETCHER
University of East Anglia, Norwich.

'The Mythmaker'

Sir, - In his review of my *The Mythmaker* (March 28), J. L. Houlden complains that I ascribe to Paul the "deflection" of Jesus, without explaining sufficiently what I mean by the term "deflection". It is an important part of my argument that Paul was a mythmaker, not a theologian. His concept of Jesus as a visitant from a higher world, who descended to save mankind by a sacrificial death, is a vivid myth; and Paul did not consider the theological problems it raises for monotheism - problems which engaged the Trinitarian theorists of later times. But I argued that Paul's view of Jesus as one to whom prayer and worship should be addressed, and with whom the worshipper can merge by a participatory mystical rite, is quite sufficient to establish that Jesus was some kind of deity in Paul's eyes.

By these criteria, Mr Houlden's suggestion that Paul's view of Jesus was akin to "Jewish Wisdom theology and apocalyptic" falls to the ground. What Jew ever addressed prayers or worship to the personification of God's wisdom who figures in Proverbs 8, or Wisdom of Solomon 6-7? What Jew ever partook of the body and blood of personified Wisdom, or of any of the apocalyptic figures? What Jew ever spoke of being "in Christ", as Paul spoke of being "in Christ"? Houlden's use of the euphemism "high" to describe Paul's view of Jesus is typical of the attempt to find gradations in what is actually a gulf of difference.

Paul's eschatological and participatory ideas, and indeed his whole myth of the descending Saviour, have no roots in Judaism, whether Palestinian or Hellenistic, but they have strong parallels in pagan religion. This is the unpalatable fact that no gulf-bridging sliding-deck, of which Mr Houlden's review is a compendium, can disguise. Paul's Christianity did not arise by evolutionary steps out of Judaism or Nazareneism. For good or ill, it was a new departure.

HYAM MACCOBY
Leo Baeck College, 80 East End Road, London N3.

This passage makes the following claims:
(1) It may be that one could not be a social being if one lacked sexual desire.
(2) A race of beings who lacked sexual desire would be animals. (They would be animals in that familiar, loaded sense in which we are not animals.)
(3) A race of beings who lacked sexual desire would lack personality.

I think (1), (2) and (3) are false. Professor Scruton has pointed out the connection between sexual desire and personality on page 183 of his book *Modernism and the Moral Life*, which is a whole, not individual members of species. He says that, although he accepts (3), he would not wish to accept (1) and (2).

(4) Sexual desire is a necessary condition of personality in every individual case. On page 348-9, however, he writes that

We could, indeed, imagine a human being "outside society", but this *homo faber*... would be without sexual desire... He would also not be a person... The building of personality and the building of desire are the same process, conceived under different aspects... Persons are essentially (sexually) desirous.

I take this to amount to the claim that sexual desire is essential to being a person; that is, more formally, a capacity to experience feelings of sexual desire is a necessary condition of personality; or, in other words, (4). (Those who mistrust the dots - or the brackets - must look up the passage.)

Furthermore - returning to page 183 - it is arguable that Scruton cannot reject (4), given his endorsement of (1). For (1) is clearly a claim about individuals, not about species. And (1) and the negation of (4) jointly entail (5) It may be that one could possess those properties that constitute one as a person while lacking those properties that constitute one as a social being.

If Scruton's general position commits him to the rejection of (5) - and it seems clear that it does (cf page 348) - then he must either reject (1) or accept (4). Hence he must accept (4), given his endorsement of (1).

GALEN STRAWSON
New College, Oxford.

'The Mythmaker'

Sir, - In his review of my *The Mythmaker* (March 28), J. L. Houlden complains that I ascribe to Paul the "deflection" of Jesus, without explaining sufficiently what I mean by the term "deflection". It is an important part of my argument that Paul was a mythmaker, not a theologian. His concept of Jesus as a visitant from a higher world, who descended to save mankind by a sacrificial death, is a vivid myth; and Paul did not consider the theological problems it raises for monotheism - problems which engaged the Trinitarian theorists of later times. But I argued that Paul's view of Jesus as one to whom prayer and worship should be addressed, and with whom the worshipper can merge by a participatory mystical rite, is quite sufficient to establish that Jesus was some kind of deity in Paul's eyes.

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HYAM MACCOBY
Leo Baeck College, 80 East End Road, London N3.

American Laureate

Sir, - What are we to learn about the unregeneracy of sexism from the way the gifted and liberal (as I thought) Christopher Hitchens expresses his relief at the gazetting of Robert Penn Warren as first poet laureate of the United States ("American foreboding" that pre-empted the connection between sexual desire and personality on page 183 of his book *Modernism and the Moral Life*, which is a whole, not individual members of species. He says that, although he accepts (3), he would not wish to accept (1) and (2).

(4) Sexual desire is a necessary condition of personality in every individual case. On page 348-9, however, he writes that

children all over the place without missing a pentameter, but even in a period when husbands pay lip service, at least, to the idea of equal sharing of parenthood, it is still the mothers, who for "unwholesome", perhaps "biological" reasons, give children priority as fathers rarely seem capable of doing.

Yet Mr Hitchens's cynic, in his mysterious reference to "growth", seems to suggest that while this is a fine subject for male poets, as in Dylan Thomas's "The Force that through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower", or Wordsworth's *The Prelude, or Growth of the Poet's Mind*, anything written on growth by a mother would be an absurdity. Is this because any mother named American poet laureate is complacently assumed to be an incompetent chosen under affirmative action pressures? Or is he perhaps jealous of women's more intimate knowledge of growth?

It is all right for women poets to be frustrated lovers of men, like Emily Brontë and Emily Dickinson, or lesbians, in the tradition of Sappho, so well represented in our own time, but mothers! Spare us that unwholesomeness!

In their scornful put-down of mothers as poets were Hitchens and his cynic deriding, for instance, Sylvia Plath who, left alone with the demands of poetry and two loved children, found the conflict too much to bear? Only a few mothers (such as Adrienne Rich) can bring themselves to step out and leave the pre-empting human demands behind. Most, as is implied by Christopher Hitchens's friend's obscene condescension, try to do the impossible, and receive for their efforts the kind of mindless, smart-alecky dismissal quoted by Hitchens with such smug satisfaction.

HOPE HALE DAVIS
14 Athens Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

Hardy's Poems

Sir, - Sir Rupert Hart-Davis misreads me (Letters, March 21) when he takes me to task for referring (March 7) to the eight separate volumes of Hardy's poems "as they were originally issued by Macmillan". He remarks that the two earliest volumes, *Wessex Poems and Poems of the Past and the Present*, were first published by Harper and Brothers. In these two cases I was referring not to first publication, but to the edition in which the books first appeared from Macmillan. In the case of the other six books, of course, there is no distinction, and with whom the worshipper can merge by a participatory mystical rite, is quite sufficient to establish that Jesus was some kind of deity in Paul's eyes.

The information that the three volumes of the new Clarendon Press edition of Hardy's *Complete Poetical Works* are to be followed by an edition of his dramatic works, including *The Dynasts*, is clearly given on the dustjacket of Volume Three. I am taken aback when Samuel Hynes (Letters, April 4) suggests that I misled Sir Rupert in this respect. Sir Rupert was misled because he pronounced about the books without having looked at them properly.

ROBERT WELLS
20 Jolly Gardeners Court, Waterloo Road, Norwich.

Lady Alexandra Metcalfe

Sir, - Your reviewer's kind notice of my selection from Lord Curzon's writings, *Travels with a Superior Person* (April 4), makes a brief reference to Curzon's daughter, "the late Lady Alexandra Metcalfe". I spoke to her on the telephone today, and she authorizes me to say that she is very much alive.

PETER KING
Savile Club, 69 Brook Street, London W1.
We apologize for this mistake, which was due and not the reviewer's.

In Correll Barnett's letter (April 11), the quotation in paragraph 4 from the minutes of the Economic Section of the War Cabinet Secretariat should have read: "any connection between full employment and productive efficiency is indirect and, indeed, ambiguous."

CHARLES WILSON
45 Queen Street, Woolwich, New South Wales, Australia.

'First with the News'

Sir, - I have never before replied to a review of any of the books I have written. But the inaccuracies and misrepresentations in John Sutherland's alleged review (February 21) of *First with the News*, my history of W. H. Smith, are so inexcusable that I am bound to make the following comments.

First, of a comment by me on the attitudes of Smith's employees: "This would be more convincing if Wilson actually dealt with the sweetly unresentful workforce. But nowhere in his account... do we get any idea of what it was like to work for Smith's below boardroom level." This is totally untrue. He has obviously not read Chapter 11, which is a detailed history of Smith's labour relations; nor Chapter 14 on the relations between the partners and the wholesome managers; nor the substantial sections of Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 dealing with the departmental managers; nor the many other references to employees below boardroom level in Chapters 8 and 13.

Second (explaining why he regards Smith's as "un-innovative"): "They did not... expand into Scotland and Ireland." Again, quite untrue. Smith's operated in Scotland from 1851 to 1857 and in Ireland for much longer, from 1850 to 1886; both enterprises are documented to the maximum allowed by the existing records in Chapters 5 and 6.

Third, your reviewer misrepresents me on several points of great importance. For example, on the economics of newspaper management: "Wilson's logic is simple: papers cost money to make, therefore they must subscribe to and support a capitalist ideology. This is shareholders' history." My logic may be simple but your reviewer shows no sign of understanding it. I explained simply that without entertainment value and the income generated by advertisements, neither *The Times* nor any other newspaper in practice either sold or made enough profit to survive and be free of government influence. If Sutherland cares to describe this as shareholders' history he is free to do so; the fact remains that the *TLS* would not be in a position to pay him his fee for writing his alleged review of my book if my simple account were not sound history.

Similarly, I am held to equate personal virtue (diligence especially) and reward, "in the form of wealth and ermine". If he had accused me of equating virtue and diligence with business success I should have no quarrel with his remark. But I have explained the facts (pages 162 and 170). William Henry II refused all public honours. He remained, as he wrote, "plain Mr Smith" and it was Queen Victoria who ennobled his widow after his death. The posthumous reward was not a recognition of his wealth or business success. It was for the services he had rendered to the nation in Parliament as a Cabinet Minister responsible successively for the Army, the Navy, Ireland and the leadership of the House of Commons.

There are other inaccuracies and misrepresentations too numerous to mention. I would draw attention only to a couple of points. First, there are enough critical observations on the partners, managers and business to refute Sutherland's charge that this history is "wholly uncritical". Second, in regard to relations between employees and employers let him simply read a sentence (page 173), basic to my interpretation, that in the nineteenth-century private business such relations sometimes resembled those of nineteenth and twentieth-century Japan more than those in modern Europe. He can draw his own conclusions.

Sutherland's review leaves me with the suspicion that he is not really interested in history. His final convoluted paragraph reveals an intellectually snobbish dislike of ordinary people who read the *Telegraph* and enjoy Agatha Christie. Given this, I can well understand his hatred of the "pompous decency" etc, which he associates with W. H. Smith. Hence his inability to understand the nature of their most important function in English social history. They brought literature of many kinds within the reach of very ordinary people who had previously had to leave such luxuries to the rich and privileged.

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COMMENTARY

Self-deceivers defeated

David Robey

GIORDANO BRUNO
Il candelajo
The Pit, Barbican

Giordano Bruno's *Il candelajo* is better than most Italian Renaissance comedies, but still a very conventional work. Its triple plot ends with the defeat and humiliation of three self-deceiving idiots: the *candelajo* of the title, who fails in his attempt to win the love of a courtesan without spending too much (*candelajo* does not mean "candle-maker" here, as the translators of this RSC production Mia Dickson and Frank Donnerell believe, but is a slang term for a homosexual); a would-be alchemist, who is fooled and defrauded by his teacher; and a pedantic, self-important schoolmaster who is tricked out of his money by a gang of rascals disguised as police and, in the rather tasteless climax to the play, beaten on his naked buttocks. The winner, apart from the gang of rascals, is a clever young painter who manages to seduce the *candelajo*'s wife.

It is hard to see in this comedy any imprint of the profound, independent and idiosyncratic philosopher who was burnt at the stake by the Inquisition in 1600 after refusing to retract his heterodox beliefs. Astrology and magic feature prominently here as they do in Bruno's serious work, but in this case only as objects of ridicule. As for the programme's claim that the play "betrays his almost frantic detestation of hypocrisy and quackery in morals as in learning, and the beginning of his formulation of a new ethic and a new philosophy", this is scarcely born out by the plot. Following a comic tradition that goes back to the *Decameron*, *Il candelajo* is an amoral celebration of deceit in which malicious intelligence triumphs over harmless stupidity. Self-deception, not hypocrisy and quackery, is the target of Bruno's scorn.

If the play has a distinctive character, it is

mainly in structure and style: in its three-part plot, and also in a strong tendency to digress, through the inclusion of a large number of more or less obscene anecdotes. These features, together with the many obscene puns and jokes and the extensive verbal caricatures, including long passages in Latin, all make it a difficult play to translate and perform today. Yet in spite of this Frank Donnerell's adaptation has remained remarkably faithful to the spirit and for the most part even to the letter of the original, including many of the puns, jokes and caricatures and a great deal of the pedantic Latin.

A lot has been cut, with a consequent improvement in the pace; the performance is well under two hours in length, whereas the original is fairly lengthy. A number of relatively minor embellishments and substitutions have been made, some of them clever, though not all necessarily for the better; the crime of stealing a cloak, for instance, becomes that of bugging sheep, and the would-be alchemist's suicide attempt at the end is a rather uninspired insertion. But the distinctive features are largely kept, and what is left is still very much Bruno's play. The misinterpretation of the title is of no consequence, since the *candelajo*'s supposed homosexuality is virtually irrelevant to the plot.

Only a few parts stand out in a generally fast and energetic, but not particularly subtle production. Mel Martin doubles skilfully as the dignified but ageing courtesan and the *candelajo*'s miming, lisping wife. Ian Talbot, who perhaps has the best of the major roles, makes an attractive caricature out of the self-important pedant Manfurio, and copes as well as might be expected with the loss of his trousers. The other two main characters, the *candelajo* himself and the would-be alchemist Bartolomeo, come across as rather too loud and ostentatious to be interesting. This is no doubt partly the fault of Bruno's text, but the whole performance would have been helped by being less noisy. Especially in the eighty oppressive intimacy of The Pit.

A family fix

David Caute

DAVID LAN
Flight
The Ghar Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

A tragic theme of the twentieth century is the Jew's escape from bondage into domination. The refugees from the *ghettos*, in flight from antisemitism and Cossack brutality, gradually abandoned their own socialist ideals as white skins; master status and upward mobility separated them from Palestinian Arabs, Harlem blacks and the "Banans" of South Africa. This erosion of idealism is the central theme of David Lan's new play, *Flight*.

The Levine family are discovered pursuing a materially modest but culturally self-confident existence in the colonial Rhodesia of the 1950s. It is Passover: the family is sustained by religion and a waning socialist idealism kept alive by memories of their flight from Lithuania in 1929. The mild, humorous book-keeper Isaac, played with a range of stock gestures by Joe Melia, and his loyal wife Hannah (Dinah Stabb) are content to dwell in impoverished domestic stasis, but history – the unforeseen rise of Zimbabwean nationalism – holds a bitter fate in store for them.

This fate is incarnated in David Lan's two most powerful characters. Isaac's splintered sister Lily and his insecure, avuncular son Mike, haunted by a personal tragedy, by obsessive memories of the heroic lover Gideon who left behind in Lithuania, Lily devotes herself with unbending idealism and good humour to African education. But her nephew Mike is ruthlessly on the make. Frustrated and contemptuous of his father, he wants his own shop, he wants many shops; treating his family as mere platoon to his ambitions. Gillian Barga and Nicholas Wooderson, invent these two key characters with authority.

The second act brings us to the Salisbury of 1976, the era of the civil war against Robert Mugabe's insurgent guerrillas. We find Mike Levine gulping whisky on the "stoep" of his luxurious suburban villa; but the remote hush war haunts his household in the shape of his son Paul, a frank, sensitive young man who has seen too much of the killing and wants no more of it. Mike rages at his son and orders him back to camp, but Aunt Lily, clinging to memories of Gideon across half a century, urges young Paul to desert the unjust war and offers him her protection. Rather and aunt both fail; and when Independence arrives in 1980 we find the panicked, depleted white Jewish family preparing to "take the gap" to South Africa. It is Passover once again and old Isaac delivers the most tragic lines of the play: for the Levines "Israel" is now to be Cape Town.

Why Isaac should adopt this counsel of despair is not entirely clear. For much of the play colonial Rhodesia hardly intrudes on the self-absorbed family arguments of the Levines. A token black, Albert, is introduced in the 1950s but he remains a symbolic figure, in his sharp business suit, twenty years later. Apart from the trauma of the young army conscript Paul, the rise of black aspirations has scarcely intruded on the Levines – they have been too busy arguing about their best outfit, about who will go to who's house for Passover, about whose knitted socks the new baby will wear for his circumcision, and about how to fix the family tax returns.

Flight is an over-long play at three hours and gives the impression of an epic novel trying to squeeze itself on to the stage. We know that Jewish families love to argue about everything, but the incessant altercations are really wearying and the crucial confrontations become submerged in the flow of bickering. David Lan's play is intelligent and packed with vitality, but he has layered the bones of the drama with an excess of naturalistic realism.

Celestial fantasia

Peter Kemp

ADRIAN MITCHELL
White Sult Blues
Radio 3

Incorporating sizeable scraps of Mark Twain's own material, *White Sult Blues* is a play patterned on those of his later works that interweave fantasy and cosmic gloom. What stops it being the fitting tribute Adrian Mitchell intends it to be is its failure to get Twain's measure as an author or a man.

Opening at Twain's funeral, the play follows him to a "Celestial Complex" somewhat irreverently staffed by upper-class English comic butts and consisting of a vast tower-block: "Three million, five hundred thousand, one hundred and forty-four floor", a lift-man is instructed, with the penchant for steep effects the play keeps parading. True to the bitter beliefs Twain broached in his terminal writings, worldly success turns out to be the criterion for elevation in this after life. Social rejects languish in a dungeon-like "Black Hole". Exemplars of Establishment greed and callousness – rulers, politicians, military top brass – are ensconced at the pinnacle of Paradise: "Zion's Golden Penthouse". Invited here to deliver an amusing after-dinner speech, Twain instead unleashes a scathing diatribe, denouncing Christianity, colonialism, and the barbarities perpetrated under cover of civilization.

During this spirited outburst to his ghostly listeners, he alludes sarcastically to "the United States of Lynchin". Mitchell might have noted, though, that in actuality, having put together a dossier on the horrendous statistics of stringing up in the States, Twain prudently refrained from publishing it lest it ruin his sales and reputation in the South. Also, while harping in private the views he gave such unequivocal voice to, he would have been only too likely, in public, to court the acclaim of the rich and successful by providing what they wanted to hear. An eager caterer to audience requirements and a compliant submitter to censorship, he was both more craven and more complex than the unfalteringly outspoken scourge of hypocrisy and the status quo Mitchell depicts him as.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 274

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than May 9. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or falling that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 274" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on May 16.

1 When she left Lillington for the wider shores of Notting Hill she gave it out that she was sick of living in a borough where everyone you met was looking after No. 2.

2 He got into a cab in Piccadilly and had himself taken to a certain address in Lillington. Here he knocked at a decent, modest door, – at such a house as men live in with two or three hundred a year.

3 A summer's day in Lillington, full of the mournful wall of antique-restoring machinery. Penicillin was unobtainably busy for the afternoon, so Arthur wandered in a blissed-out haze and looked at the shops which, in Lillington, are quite a useful bunch, as anyone who regularly needs old woodworking tools, Boer-war helmets, drag office furniture or fish will readily confirm.

Competition No 275
Winner: Brian Andrews

Answers:

1 "All of a sudden everybody started to throw things. Not me. Niggerd just knocked local boy down. Niggerd but up his glove. Wanted to make a speech. A noble-looking nigger. Started to make a speech. Then local white boy hit him. Then he knocked white boy cold. Then everybody commenced to throw chairs. Niggerd went home with us in

ell depicts him as.

Peopling his books with doubles, twins, twins and impostors, Twain – who talked, as he was dying, about Jekyll and Hyde and his personality – was a notoriously divided individual. Like the Siamese twins he wrote a fascinatedly about, he contained two persons lites under the same skin: one tame and compliant, the other bursting with unruly wit and fury. Using its celestial fantasia to hang on to one component of his character – the anarchic rage – Mitchell's post-mortem takes the essence of Twain: a desire simultaneously to ingratiate and to indict, a need to be applauded by those he decries.

Only the bizarrely oscillating scenery – curiously suggestive of both Ronald Reagan and the Revd fan Palsey – deployed by Harry Towh in the play's central role gives any effect of doubleness to this Twain. The rendering of extracts from the author's work is inspired, too, by the intrusion into them of other characters. Since Twain – who once said "I used to play with the pause as other children played with a toy" – was an artist aware of pace, rhythm, carefully timed effects, to interrupt his prose set-pieces is to do him a peculiar disservice. Significantly, the last two passages in the play – a galloping description of the Pony Express, an account of gliding down the Mississippi – are ones whose tempo is not broken.

Even the robust buoyancy of the Mississippi sequence ultimately sinks, though, under the load of misapprehension and mawkishness Mitchell heaps into his play's last scene. Flung out of Heaven, Twain, along with his daughter Susy, lands on Huck and Jim's raft. Reunited with other members of the Celestial family, the crew then sail along, chorusing "All I Want is a River and a Raft" – that is their idea of paradise. Given that Susy Clemens, who always hoped that Twain would turn out more "uplifting" productions like *Joan of Arc*, loathed *Huckleberry Finn* and blushed at her father's reputation as a salty eccentric, this seems an unlikely eventuality. That she and her propriety-conscious mother, strangely seen by Mitchell as "throw out" from respectability – should take with relief to a life of nautical vagabondage is the one genuinely hilarious notion in this rather ludicrous piece.

our car. Couldn't get his clothes. Wore my coat. Remember the whole thing now. Big morning evening."

Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, chapter 8.

2 I wanted to deliver my speech more than anything else in the world, because I felt that only one man could judge truly my ability, and now this man was ruining my chances. I began to cough, carefully now, moving in to punch him and out again with my greater speed. A lucky blow to his side and he had him going too – until I heard a loud voice say, "I got my money on the big boy."

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, chapter 1.

3 Like many eminent members of his profession, he was rather prone to tears when his feelings were wounded; and his countenance was falling rapidly when Lord Worthington came up to him.

"I had no idea you were such an orator," he said. "You can go into the church any time you want out the other trade. Eh?"

G. B. Shaw, *Cathedral Byron's Profession*, chapter 1.

Exhibitions this spring and summer at The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, will be: "From Marchants to Emperors: British India, 1757-1930", from May 1 to July 21, which will include more than 150 drawings, watercolours, prints and photographs documenting two centuries of British rule in India, selected chiefly from the private collection of Paul F. Walter; "Gustav Mahler (1860-1911): Franz Liszt (1811-1886)", from April 12 to July 31, to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of Mahler's death and the 100th anniversary of the death of Liszt; and "Romanesque Masterpieces of Illumination", from April 17 to July 31, a small exhibition of early, medieval and Carolingian manuscripts from the Library's collection.

With downcast gaze

Marina Warner

Alfred Gilbert (1854-1934): Sculptor of Eros Royal Academy, until June 29

Alfred Gilbert's subjects rarely look you in the eye. Eros languidly fixes on some vague middle distance, but does not mark with his gaze the target of his "missile of kindness"; the beautifully balanced *contrapposto* of "Perseus Arming" catches the hero in the act of checking his winged ankle with a graceful downward look over the shoulder; Icarus, sheathed in his wings as if hatching from them, lowers his eyes, perhaps to contemplate the death-throes of the dove in the snake's coils on his pedestal.

With these youths, Gilbert openly challenged several Renaissance masterpieces – Donatello's "David", Cellini's "Perseus" and Giambologna's "Mercury" – which he had seen in Italy in the 1870s, at a crucial period of his formation as England's most virtuosic Victorian sculptor. His sensitive modelling of flesh, of bones moving beneath the skin, his technical brilliance in casting bronze and other metals according to the lost wax process, deservedly raised a storm of praise when the "Perseus" and the "Icarus" were exhibited in London in 1882 and 1884. But Gilbert perceived his heroes with little of his Renaissance contemporaries' humanist confidence and affirmation. He intensifies their vulnerability; for them, the test lies ahead, and it will be poignant, not glorious, and perhaps not even tragic. The sculptor accentuates their condition of naked exposure by a realist attention to mountaineers, to the straps on Icarus' wings, to the heavy helmets above the delicate features. His male figures suffer their magnificent, artificial trappings, rather than exist in them or control them. By contrast, his nymph "An Offering to Hymen" stands purposefully; his adored mother, in a bust of 1904 called with unwitting comedy, "The Mother of the 9th Symphony", possesses the courage to look up.

The Royal Academy's exhibition increases

Scott's Magnum Opus returns

Janet Adam Smith

"Constable has a scheme of publishing the works of the Author of W...y in a superior style at £1.1 volume. . . . I have only to contribute the Notes which are light work". Walter Scott wrote in his Journal in December 1825. This came the credit crash of 1826, the downfall of Constable, and Scott's financial ruin. So when Robert Cadell, who bought the copyrights in 1827, revived the idea of a collected edition – in a cheaper, more popular style than Constable had contemplated – Scott saw it as a "bright prospect" to extricate himself from his affairs. The Magnum Opus, as it was called, became his strongest weapon in his fight with creditors. He worked doggedly on it till near his death, while still producing new work. "The magnum keeps its ground", he wrote in May 1830, and by September 1831 Cadell could report sales of 30,000 a month. When Scott died the next year, his debts were almost paid.

Cadell had supplied him with octavo volumes of earlier editions, interleaved. On the interleaves, and in the margins of the printed pages, Scott made copious corrections and insertions, and newly composed notes. Though spurred on by financial rather than literary pressures, he did not skimp his task; "I must multiply the notes therefore where there is a chance of giving pleasure and variety." So he collected anecdotes and antiquarian details, wrote material supplied by others, sent extra passages even when a volume was in the press. He often overran the blank pages and added separate sheets, so the forty-one volumes of the Magnum Opus, when rebound to preserve all these additions, contained a mass of manuscript material, nearly all in Scott's hand, visible witness to his heroic labours.

A. and C. Black, who bought the Scott copyrights from Cadell, sold the forty-one volumes to a New York dealer in 1929. Ten

the atmosphere of invalidish oppression. The architect Piers Gough has draped the rooms in widow's weeds, and ruled the photographs and captions on the walls in black like *faux-parts* to a death in the family. Here and there the mortuary drapes become grey or cream, suspended from spearheads like heraldic banners in the side chapels of military orders. Theatrical touches emulate Victoria's own décor at Osborne; just as the Queen displayed casts of her children's hands, this show sets out the casting sections of Eros like prostheses in a surgical suppliers' window, tastefully arranged on rucked grey cheesecloth. If Eros alert and on optoe were present, and the design of the exhibition sunnier, it is possible that Gilbert would not come across as such a clammy and crepuscular spirit.

In the undertaker's gloom, however, certain Gilbertian motifs appear to recur with stifling insistence. On the Pausanias Memorial in Westminster Abbey of 1885-7 (represented necessarily by a photograph), Gilbert included "Sympathy", a female nude, with brooding downcast gaze, gradually becoming entangled in brambles like a maldenly Laocoon who does not struggle but exemplifies her virtue by bearing the pain passively. "Sympathy" foreshadows the memorial to the Marchioness of Albury at Savernake who wails, again with shielded glance, behind a sprouting tree which screens her and her attendant cherubs from inspection. But Gilbert's concern with the human split enmeshed and impeded by vigorous exterior forces culminates most successfully in the exultant, frail, silver-gold and pink statuette of the Virgin he made for the tomb of the Duke of Clarence. A *Rosa Marica*, she is entwined in hirs growing up and around her to form a May Queen's garland that is also a crown of thorns.

Richard Dormant, who has written the detailed illustrated biography of the sculptor (reviewed in the TLS of October 4, 1985) has also organized the show and compiled the equally handsome catalogue. He offers highly sympathetic readings of the connections between the work and the life, which finally led to the

artist's bankruptcy of 1901, his exile in Belgium and his ignominious resignation from the Royal Academy in 1908, and it is easy to see these Ladies of Dolours and mini-Laocöons, more and more entangled in tentacular growth, as images of Gilbert's weak struggles with the misfortunes which overwhelmed him.

The sculptor's virtuosity, his jeweller's wizardry, sometimes make his artifices appear to his simulacra, even casts from life, but in his work, observed phenomena are always shifting from one species to another according to fancy. The slippage can be alight: the liliars of the Virgin are not rose stems, but fibrous and square like clematis. But sometimes the metamorphoses are greater, and the species leap categories altogether. The amour worn by St George, so carefully constructed that Gilbert claimed an armourer could scale it up to fit a man, appears made of sea-shells and snakeskin. The metal has lost its inert character and become organic. St Michael's greaves look like bark shed by a plane tree, his wings like husks, while the landscape on which he stands also represents the reptilian body of his adversary. Natural forms ooze into one another, breaking their ordained boundaries: in the famous centrepiece or epergne, a mermaid, astride a sphere of rock crystal, has a double tail of seaweed fronds that fan out into fins like dragon's wings, inlaid with abalone shell. The epergne is a monstrous bibelot, a nightmare for servants to clean (perhaps that is why Queen Mary had it gilded), but it also reveals the closeness of Gilbert's fantasy to the illustrators and fairy painters of Victorian folklore, Arthur Rackham and Joseph Noel Paton.

For all Gilbert's technical inventiveness, his type of imagination does not go very deep. Fairy-tale imagery can give you goosebumps, but loosened from the structure of story and belief, it does not touch the springs of sympathy and understanding beneath the surface. Gilbert added in the diary he wrote in Bruges that as a child he "dreamed not of Protestant austerity but poetic ecstasy [sic]"; and later he defended his "embellishments" when he argued, "Many who pretend their simplicity is grandeur in Art do so because they do not know how to elaborate . . .". But his rapturous elaborations often fail to convince that they wrap a core, his religious feelings seem decorative, his emotional range remains narrow. Even "Eros", "the most charming statue



A self-portrait by Alfred Gilbert, c 1912, reproduced from the catalogue of the exhibition reviewed here (224pp, £9.90).

in London", as Dormant says, hardly expresses erotic passion (and would not have lasted if it did), but it is not successful either at conveying the principle of selfless love, Anteros, as Gilbert intended. The sculptor seems to have once portrayed a loving couple, in the funeral urn "Mors fanua Vitae"; except for some early Maternity and Charity figures, profoundly influenced by Dalou, his figures usually stand alone.

Gilbert returned to the theme of mother and child in some of his last sculptures to survive, the grand memorial to Queen Alexandra, in which a semi-naked human soul is cradled by Faith, Hope and Charity like mothers of mercy enfolding a sinner. In a pair of similar painted plaster figures done in Bruges during the First World War, "Peace" drops her eyes in the Gilbertian manner, and cradles her child's head; "War" has her eyes open and gazes steadfastly ahead. The difference in "War" is a marked one in Gilbert's oeuvre. But it does not on its own mark the difference between peace and war with anything like sufficient empathy or imagination, and this late sculpture's failure seals Gilbert's ultimate incapacity to symbolize what he knew of suffering and courage and love.

From sensuousness to sobriety

Edward Timms

Vienna 1880-1938: Naissance d'un siècle
Pompidou Centre, Paris, until May 5

This exhibition, which is an extended version of the Vienna original, establishes Viennese modernism as one of the seminal movements of the twentieth century. We are welcomed into a plush Victorian interior, where the resonance of a Bösendorfer piano temporarily holds us entranced. But from the decorum of Brahms we are steadily carried forward towards the austerity of Alban Berg; the opulent portraiture of Klimt leads to the skeletal figures of Schiele; the indulgent eroticism of Schnitzler gives way to the astringency of Moll; the architectural lavishness of the Ringstrasse to the angular functionalism of Josef Frank; the impressionism of Mach to the rigour of Wittgenstein. Interwoven with these main lines of development is a rich display of minor arts – furniture and textile design, glass and ceramics, photographs, posters and even toys. Technological developments are also represented, from the lying of electric cables in the 1880s to the first streamlined motor car around 1930. The exhibition is carefully structured and yet has exceptional amplitude.

From the wealth of detail the essential quest of Viennese culture emerges: salvation through sensuous experience. Every dimension of sensuous experience is explored to its limit: through music and through colour, through the tactile value of materials and the geometrical lines of design, the sensuous appeal of the body, and the subliminal realm of the unconscious, and the study of Scott.

the austere delights of language and the pleasures of the palate (a complete Viennese coffee-house fills the central hall). Rarely have the delights of the senses been so insistently explored. But the logic of the exhibition shows that sensuous experience is not enough. Aesthetics delight ultimately dissolves into existential anxiety. And it becomes clear that civilization can only be sustained by more rational principles.

By the 1920s the moral is clear: salvation must be found in a sober world. This in their different fields is the message of Wittgenstein, Musil, Freud, Loos, Schoenberg and Popper. Otto Neurath's pictograms represent the culmination of a debate about the human figure which has moved from indulgence to statistical precision. In this sense Viennese modernism is a success story, demonstrating exemplary adjustments to a technocratic age. But its cultural evolution is never free of apocalyptic undertones. The First World War (reflected in the nightmare visions of Kraus and Kubin) casts a heavy shadow. And we are reminded by a striking sequence of watercolours, painted in Vienna before 1914 by Adolf Hitler, that art and politics continuously intertwine.

This Paris exhibition is superior to its predecessor in Vienna, *Dream and Reality: Vienna 1870-1930* (TLS, April 12, 1985), because it never loses sight of the political dimension. The posters which prior to 1914 had insisted on the autonomy of art proclaim after 1919 the inescapable primacy of politics. The final display juxtaposes pictures of Hitler returning in triumph in 1938 with the faces of that extraordinarily gifted generation that was forced into exile.

Choices in an unreal world

Barry Stroud

J. L. MACKIE
Selected Papers
Edited by Joan Mackie and Penelope Mackie
Volume One: Logic and Knowledge. 248pp.
Volume Two: Persons and Values. 256pp.
Oxford: Clarendon Press. £22.50 each.
019 823679 X and 019 824678 1

J. L. Mackie died in 1981 aged sixty-four. In the last eight years of his life he published five books and finished a sixth, which appeared posthumously. These six books covered an impressively wide range in philosophy: conditionals and probability, causality, the philosophy of Locke, ethics without objective values, Hume's moral theory, and what Mackie called the miracle of theism. Now we have two volumes of papers, most of which come from that same highly productive period. Mackie had drawn up a selection with two such volumes in mind, and his editors, Joan Mackie and Penelope Mackie, have added ten more essays to his original list. About one-fifth of what is here has not been published before. Some of these collected papers overlap one or another of his books, but many do not. They range from discussions of certainty, proof, ideology, intentionality, the mind-body problem, the self, space and time, anti-realism, meaning, aesthetics, and evolution, to the questions about morality in general and utilitarianism in particular that take up most of the second volume. That was the area Mackie was working on at the time of his death. There is apparently more unpublished material to appear later in a book about justice and rights.

What comes through strongly when the essays are surveyed together is Mackie's singularity and independence of mind. He seems, at least in his later years, to have been immune to philosophical fashion or, more likely, to have set himself against it. He takes each issue or doctrine as it comes, distinguishes among the various reasons on one side or the other, and then assesses the arguments individually on their merits, supplementing or rejecting them as he sees fit. This patient divide-and-conquer strategy is applied in these pages to the views of many contemporary philosophers, often with the unsurprising verdict that their conclusions are not fully supported or are open to several different interpretations. Recently or currently influential doctrines of Ayer, Popper, Dummett, Anscombe, Strawson, Hart, Warnock, Dworkin, Hare, and others are given this treatment. Getting what you take to be an undistorted view of the emperor's new clothes offers special satisfaction in a subject as fashion-bound as philosophy has become.

Mackie's own positive views are also on the whole independent of recently prevailing trends. He shows again and again that he found no reason to abandon what to him must have seemed like nothing more than the enlightened common sense of a fairly familiar variety of "empiricism". All knowledge ultimately rests on perception. There are no intrinsically true or false empirical knowledge, but perception does involve "pictures" before the mind which either do or do not resemble the external things they are pictures of. There is therefore a perfectly meaningful question whether the world really matches up to the pictures we have of it, and the answer is "Yes, it does", at least with respect to the sizes, shapes, motions and other properties of those things mentioned in physics. We know that answer is correct because it provides the best explanation of the experiences we undoubtedly have. In gaining knowledge of the world we do reason inductively, and in doing so we implicitly rely on a general principle of the uniformity of nature. But contrary to familiar sceptical arguments, which are in any case fallacious, we actually have good inductive reasons for accepting that principle as well as the more specific conclusions it can be used to support.

The world that really exists around us, on Mackie's view, is a pretty austere place. In *Problems From Locke* he got it down to nothing more than the objects and relations mentioned in physics. Causality does hold among them, but causality is in fact nothing more than the regularity with which one sort of thing follows another. Our idea of causality might involve more; but that is all there is in

reality. In one of the latest papers here Mackie even defends absolute space and time as true of that real world. He distinguishes among fourteen different absolute theories and argues for about nine of them, including the thesis that there is such a thing as absolute rest and therefore absolute position. That sounds like "The emperor is naked" applied to all of twentieth-century physics as well, and Mackie does little to dispel that impression. He concedes that his philosophical absolutism would make no difference to physics "as an applied theory", but he does insist that it should matter "to someone who is interested in the truth, in the question about what is the case".

This is not really a suggestion that physicists are not interested in the truth about the world. Rather it is part of Mackie's staunch defence of the objectivity of truth against the idea that only something we could discover or somehow verify could even possibly be true. He thought there really was such a thing as absolute rest, but he also thought we could never identify it. He saw no contradiction between the two. This is but one instance of the quite general rejection of verificationism that was at the heart of his understanding, not only of meaning, but of philosophy itself.

Mackie never subscribed to the idea that philosophy is the analysis of language. There are here a few early papers in which he criticizes linguistic philosophy for its conservatism or conformism in refusing to go beyond facts about what we say and mean. He did not abandon that point as linguistic philosophy became more sophisticated. He thought there were three kinds of analysis – conceptual, epistemic and factual. Only conceptual analysis is concerned with meaning, with what our concepts actually are and what we mean or imply when we use them as we do. Epistemic analysis asks to what extent we can know the truth or falsity of those things we say and mean and understand. Verificationism would not distinguish between the two different tasks. Mackie insisted that they are different, but he insisted even more strongly that "factual" analysis is also essential to philosophy. It is what gives philosophy a connection with reality. It asks what actually exists or goes on in the objective world in those cases in which we think a certain concept applies. Some concepts might have little or no basis in reality, so knowing what we mean and applying the concepts appropriately in the way our practices require does not imply that reality is in fact the way we thereby see and believe it to be. Much of Mackie's criticism of other philosophers takes this form. In this view of philosophy I think he shows most clearly the influence of his teacher in Sydney, John Anderson, about whom there are two memorial essays republished here.

Factual analysis is what makes room for Mackie's well-known "error" theory, according to which there is a startling discrepancy between most of what we say and think and feel about the world and what there really is. There, really is matter, and physics alone describes it and accounts for its behaviour. But physics says nothing of colours and sounds, for example, so with physics as the standard there are no colours or sounds in reality. On that same standard there are no feelings or wishes or hopes in reality either, no thoughts or beliefs or theories, no minds, no moral values, not even any people. But their unreality does not mean we should take no further interest in such things. The philosophical task is to understand them by somehow connecting them with what is real. There is no hope, for Mackie, of explaining the very meaning of our talk of colours or feelings or minds or persons in purely "factual" terms. If we could, that would show that those things are all part of reality after all. But that kind of analysis fails. What we mean is not necessarily the same as what is real; the one cannot be reduced to the other. The difference between factual and conceptual analysis goes hand in hand with the "error" theory.

This makes Mackie's wide range in philosophy even more remarkable. Almost everything he philosophizes about is something that on his own view is not part of reality. Here he shares the way ideologies affect our thinking about society. He acknowledges that cultural ideas like theories, languages, or systems of law persist, grow and decay, and that they have observable effects. He finds significance in the idea of multiple personality and in the thought

of a pure Cartesian ego. But there are no such things in reality. He worries about mind, speculating in one essay that perhaps mental features are somehow inseparably linked by causal relations to certain physical processes in brains. That would ensure their reality by connecting them with "the fundamental laws of working of the natural world". But in another essay he finds no way to explain how intentionality, which he takes to be a mark of the mental, could be a feature of any physical system. Even if we could analyse the meaning or structure of the language in which beliefs and other intentional states are expressed, we would still need to know what reality underlies it. And for Mackie irreducible intentionality would be fatal to physicalism.

The starkest and most revealing application of Mackie's conception of philosophy is to be found in his moral philosophy. Whenever we say that something is good or bad, or ought or ought not to be done, we are saying something that is not true. There is simply nothing in reality that could even possibly correspond to what we say and mean. Let a linguistic philosopher analyse thoroughly the meanings of our moral words and exhibit correctly all their implications, be still cannot avoid the conclusion that they all serve to express nothing more than an elaborate illusion – a systematic error we all fall into making an evaluative verdict. That is what Mackie's denial of the objectivity of values amounts to. Factual analysis reveals that there are no such things in reality.

These metaphysical shortcomings of morality might seem less disturbing when we remember all the other things reality lacks on Mackie's view. And they make no difference to our practical judgments or our moral behaviour either. Any question of value for Mackie involves choice or endorsement, not discovery of moral truths. But we can argue just as strenuously and forcefully for a certain recommen-

Doing without caring

Troels Engberg-Pedersen

BRAD INWOOD
Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism
348pp. Oxford University Press. £25.
019 8247397

Stoic ethics has had a peculiar history. It had a considerable influence on Jewish and Christian theology in the first centuries AD (from Philo to Boethius) in spite of being constantly attacked for its apparent materialism, was largely neglected in the Middle Ages, but underwent a revival of interest during the Renaissance which reached its peak during the Enlightenment. Thus Kant should be seen as reviving central Stoic concerns in ethics (through Cicero, whom he studied closely), most importantly the project of founding morality on an analysis of practical reason.

The importance of Stoic ethics is not generally acknowledged. To take one example only, when in his recent book on *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* Bernard Williams singles out Aristotle and Kant for particularly careful critical but also sympathetic discussion, he is in fact resuscitating the two most developed ethical theories bequeathed to us from antiquity (Aristotle and the Stoics) – though Williams himself does not note this.

The reason for this lack of acknowledgement is not difficult to find. The textual evidence for Stoic ethics in its original form is very poor, consisting as it does mainly of fragments scattered to the works of later authors; many of whom were hostile to the Stoics and quoted them only to ridicule them. The result is that many central tenets in Stoic ethics continue to baffle even specialists.

Thus, there is no general agreement on how to understand, in the Stoic ideal of a human being (the sage), the relation between his concern about, and indifference towards, external goods like health, wealth etc. On the one hand, Stoic happiness seems to imply total indifference to such goods, on the other it seems actually to consist in not directed precisely towards procuring them for oneself. Again, there is the thorny question of how to reconcile the Stoics' uncompromising stance on the

dation or proposal as we can for a matter of fact. That is what Mackie does in most of his *Ethics: Inventing right and wrong* and in many of these papers. He does not just analyse moral language or explain the nature of morality, he tries to develop in general terms a workable set of ideas that will do best what we want a moral system to do.

Several papers here form part of Mackie's increasing support for a "right-based" moral theory against its "goal-based" and "duty-based" rivals. Some of his allies in that dispute, especially Ronald Dworkin, come in for their share of criticism. Mackie seemed to find it hard to disagree with in the work of Derek Parfit, who is on the other side, but not surprisingly there are extensive criticisms of the logically derived utilitarianism of R. M. Hare. Some more speculative papers explore sympathetically an evolutionary or broadly sociobiological account of the development of morality, drawing on ideas as diverse as those of Edward Westermarck and Richard Dawkins. If something like Mackie's metaphysical views are correct that is presumably the best place to look for some facts of reality to which our complex moral and social arrangements could be intelligibly connected.

It is good to have these two volumes. They combine serious, tough-minded hard work with a variety of subject-matter probably as great as that of anyone writing philosophy in English today. The effects the individual essays continue to have is heightened by their juxtaposition and by their being more obviously the expression of a single powerful conception of philosophy. They present issues squarely and never waver in their conviction that somewhere there are right answers to be found. And in their patient acknowledgement that the answers are not likely to be simple or easy come by they remind us that haste, obscurity and evasiveness are not endemic to philosophy at its best.

question of physical (and hence, they seem to imply, also mental) determinism with their strong emphasis on human responsibility, or even freedom. Finally, there is the question how to understand their apparently extreme monistic (in fact "intellectualist") account of mental capacities like perception and desire as so many manifestations of a single capacity (that of reason) with their sustained attempt to explain apparent cases of mental conflict.

It is understandable, then, that Stoic ethics remains, in the general consciousness, in the shadow of its immediate predecessors, Aristotle, *Ethics and Human Action* in *Early Stoicism* should help to change this. Brad Inwood has set himself the task of reconstructing the Stoic psychology of action (Part One) and of applying his results to the questions raised by Stoic ethics (Part Two). He is extremely well equipped for the task. He has a sure grasp of the scattered textual material, he is admirably versed in modern scholarship and at home in modern work on relevant topics in the philosophy of mind and action. The book is a thorough and comprehensive treatment of its subject, and there is no doubt that it will be required reading for anyone working in the area. It is also rather heavy going, however, and I doubt whether philosophers – and other potential readers – who do not already look favourably on ancient philosophy will have the necessary patience to struggle through Prolegomena to the study of the text. The book's often very intricate discussions of the disconnected textual material.

I am not convinced that the book makes a genuine advance in the understanding of Stoic ethics. Where Inwood has most to add to present knowledge is in his analysis of what he might call the substructure of Stoic ethical theories, viz their psychology of action. Here he topics like the ontological status of passions, "faculties", the relationship of "presentations", "impulses", "assents" and reason, and the Stoic analysis of passion, Inwood is at his most original and informative. When he turns to ethical problems, by contrast, his solutions seem traditional – as he acknowledges. The book remains a major contribution, but the break-through in the interpretation of Stoic ethics that he long overdue.

Expectations of reform

David Levering Lewis

GILBERT WARE
William Hastie: Grace under pressure
355pp. Oxford University Press. £28.50.
019 332298 5

William Henry Hastie caused a "modest sensation" in early January, 1943, by resigning from his increasingly impotent position as spokesman for Afro-American interests in the US War Department, then the most institutionally racist of federal bureaucracies. His appointment in 1940 as special civilian assistant on Negro Affairs had been dictated by election-year politics. Charles Hamilton Houston, Hastie's second cousin, mentor, and, arguably, the most innovative among civil rights lawyers of his generation, had given President Roosevelt's Secretary of War an impassioned voice three years earlier: "The Negro population will not silently suffer the discrimination and abuse which were heaped upon Negro soldiers and officers in World War I." Such warnings now threatened to fulfil themselves at the polls, as many Afro-American voters began to defect from Roosevelt to Wendell Wilkie, the increasingly popular Republican candidate. Already aggrieved by exclusion from defence industry jobs, these voters were infuriated by White House approval of mobilization plans for a completely segregated Army, Army Air Corps and Navy (the Marines intended to maintain their tradition of total black exclusion).

On the day of Hastie's War Department appointment, the Army's ranking Afro-American colonel, Benjamin O. Davis, Sr, became the first brigadier of his race. The combative *Pittsburgh Courier*, the leading Afro-American newspaper, while not dismissing the importance of the appointments, nevertheless predicted that neither man would be able to withstand the deeply entrenched policies of military apartheid. But if ability and diplomacy could have made a difference, Hastie was

uniquely qualified for the challenge. Part of that minuscule cohort which W. E. B. Du Bois dubbed the Talented Tenth, Hastie (1904-76) (like his inspirational Washington, DC relative, "Charlie" Houston) had earned the admiration of the Harvard Law School's exigent Felix Frankfurter, and become, after Houston, the second of his race to write for the *Harvard Law Review* (1930). They were both nurtured in a secure Afro-American upper-class environment where being black was never conceded to mean being disadvantaged, only slightly different. Both men expected that their lives' achievements would result in significant social change.

Houston, nine years Hastie's senior, had restructured Howard University Law School during the early 1930s, introducing the first course in civil rights law in the United States. Hastie began work for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) even before he had finished his Harvard doctorate in jurisprudence. Houston, who would leave Howard to become the NAACP's second salaried legal counsel in 1935, had already begun to perfect a grand plan to dismantle segregation by challenging through the courts graduate and professional schools restricted to whites. The 1933 case of *Hocutt v Wilson* involved the first suit by a black person to enter a "white" professional school in the South, the school of pharmacy of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Hastie and the NAACP lost the case on a technicality, but the courtroom drama matching Hastie, *Harvard Law Review* incumbent, and the state Attorney General, whose manner and brief were purest Dogpatch, was widely reported in the press and seen as something of a moral victory for the cause of civil rights.

Returning to his position in the Department of the Interior, Hastie assisted Robert Weaver, another in the tiny Afro-American cohort. In working out racial quotas for New Deal alphabet agencies – the federal government's first "affirmative action" experiment – and, in 1937, was appointed by the President as judge

Sobering the nation

Andrew Sinclair

K. AUSTIN KERR
Organized for Prohibition: A new history of the wet-saloon league
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020193293 5

Prohibition was not the experiment that President Hoover called it, but a reform. It lasted for fourteen years to the United States of America and was the only constitutional amendment ever to be repealed. Although the alleged consumption of alcohol fell by more than a half, Prohibition was a Commandment more honoured in the breach than the observance. It was inflicted on the American people by the most effective reform group yet organized in the United States, the Anti-Saloon League. This new history of its origins, methods, success, division and failure, supervised by Peter Odegard's classic *Pressure Politics*. It is based on recent access to the League's archives in Ohio and to the unpublished correspondence of its leaders. It shows how an organized minority could foist a social change on an unformed nation in the name of God, health and home and how attempts to enforce unpopular laws led to repudiation and repeal.

K. Austin Kerr refers the rise of the Anti-Saloon League after the 1890s to the managerial revolution in the United States. From its inception, the League was to be like a business firm, bureaucratic and not democratic, run by self-perpetuating executive committees. Taking advantage of prevailing progressive sentiments, the League invoked a "liquor trust" from the scattered ranks of the distillers and brewers in order to destroy their trade. Choosely to regulate themselves too late, the liquor manufacturers found themselves effected nearly state-wide and nationally. The model of the Anti-Saloon League in Ohio developed into a nationwide organization that used methods learned by influencing legislators in Congress to sway Congress. The old political machine proven; as Ohio goes, so goes the

of the federal district court of the territory of the Virgin Islands. The irony that Roosevelt chose him, a second-class American (the American Bar Association was to reject his membership application two years later), to occupy a position for which trained Virgin Islanders were deemed unsuited was not lost on Hastie.

In Gilbert Ware's monograph, something of the subject's principled approach to public service comes through, despite the author's bafflingly disjointed account of the period: Hastie's avuncular upping of the Islands' carnivorous political factions; efforts to mediate the racist policies of the Civilian Conservation Corps; well-advertised absence from a round of parties for the officers and men of a Nazi warship; abrogation of the Islands' colour code.

Little wonder that during his period at the War Department, war secretaries Henry L. Stimson and Robert Patterson found Hastie so increasingly independent and critical that the note, "Not to be shown to Judge Hastie", soon appeared on racially sensitive departmental memoranda. Vigilantly opposed to segregated Army Officer training facilities, to a segregated Air Corps, and to the wholesale conversion of Afro-American combat units to service functions, Hastie resigned when these policies hardened. Even though his Afro-American War Department successors were far more

ready to appease traditional and segregationist forces, Hastie's resignation coincided with, and to some extent caused, the beginning of the end of US military apartheid.

Back at Howard Law School as Dean, Hastie worked with Thurgood Marshall to win *Smith v Allwright* (1944) and *Morgan v Virginia* (1946), which were important Supreme Court cases affecting southern voting rights and interstate travel. Ware's chronology is much clearer at this point, his narrative less bedevilled by infelicitous syntax and irrelevant anecdotes – all of which seriously mar the first third of his book. Hastie's return to the Virgin Islands as governor (another racial first) and his robust campaigning for Truman in the 1948 cliffhanger election provide both forgotten and new information (for example, White House counsellor Clark Clifford's memorandum on neutralizing the third-party candidate, Henry Wallace, by special concessions to Afro-Americans) in a work that is as well researched as its text is unsatisfactory. Because of his earlier moderation on the subject of Communist Party involvement in civil rights (treated here too briefly), Hastie endured months of senatorial red-baiting. But, in July 1950, his nomination, by President Truman, to the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit was confirmed. Astonishingly, Ware's book ends here, although Hastie's tenure as federal judge was to run for some twenty years.

Another American dream

Barbara Goodwin

HOWARD P. SEGAL
Technological Utopianism in American Culture
301pp. Chicago University Press. \$30 (paperback, \$14.95).
0226 74436 1

Every utopian dream of a physically sanitized society cleansed of dirt, disease, corruption and waste, where a happy, well-adjusted citizenry go about their business in an orderly fashion. To this end, early utopians planned perfect environments, as Helen Rosenau has shown in *The Ideal City*; later utopians invoked the panacea of technology. Howard P. Segal draws a composite picture of this latter ideal from the work of twenty-five "technological utopians" in the period 1883 to 1933 who believed technical progress to be good in itself. These writers, apart from Edward Bellamy (whose controversial *Looking Backward* of 1883 portrayed an authoritarian, state-capitalist America in AD 2000) are already forgotten. All consider the mastery of nature as the fulfilment of human destiny. They imagine "industrialized gardens", rural megalopolises linked by superb transport systems. Work, the primary activity of utopian citizens, is transformed super-efficiently; domestic life is transformed by gadgets. The system is run by technocrats, and ideological disagreements are unknown.

Late nineteenth-century moral philosophy preferred an organic model of society to the earlier mechanistic one. Segal shows how the technological utopians followed this intellectual fashion, depicting industrial society in which differentiation and spontaneity, rather than uniformity, flourished. The organic model, by implication, foreshadows a society where the division of labour promotes self-fulfilment, rather than the soulless life of industrial cloaca depicted in *Brave New World*, though it is questionable whether such a society, based inevitably on the minute division of labour and simplification of tasks, could realize this without super-automation enabling people to devote themselves to leisure and play. Indeed, American life today may partly realize the utopians' dreams, but work takes up much of the average American's day, and play is an alien concept – leisure is taken seriously.

Segal invokes the newly popular notion of a "technological plateau", which occurs when a society, which has achieved a certain technological level refuses further innovation. Hilarious detail such as plateaus in the Middle Ages, and also in Japan, during its long eschewal of the use of gunpowder. Many European utopians, including the early socialists and Marx, advocated such a plateau. In effect, by contrast, most American utopians had boundless

confidence in technological progress. The utopian proponents of a technological plateau usually presuppose that abundance has been achieved. The problem today is that with escalating wants, we can have no idea of what abundance is, or of when it has been achieved. Unequal distribution causes further problems.

An alternative strategy has been proposed by European utopians in the "ascetic utopia" which takes scarcity of resources into consideration. In such a utopia, limited consumption guarantees a comfortable but modest standard of living, and further technological progress is foregone. "Ascetic utopias" such as those of More, Morley and even Rousseau, have been criticized for being static, doubtless because they challenge the dominant ideology of progress. But perhaps the only hope for the future lies in stasis, in a zero-growth equilibrium of depletion and replenishment of resources. Unfortunately, modern society, particularly under capitalism, generates new "needs" as part of its inevitable expansion, as Marx perceived, and the chances of self-restraint, however desirable, are slim, especially where those needs are military. The link between technology and capitalism is strong, but Segal, significantly, does not discuss it.

Since most of the utopians' prophecies not only came true but have been superseded, their technological fantasies are themselves uninteresting, a problem which Segal is unable to overcome. But their faith in technology as an end in itself is of interest, and Segal uses this faith as a peg on which to hang his disparate essays on the (often undocumented) lives of the utopians, on their European predecessors, and on American attitudes to technology. He shows how utopian proposals were echoed in movements such as "Taylorism", the crusade for scientific management, and in the vague but popular doctrine of Technocracy. However he does not address several important questions. Why did Americans embrace technology as utopia, while many Europeans held to the pessimistic vision of H. G. Wells? And why were most European utopian socialists, while American utopians were "reformed capitalists"?

It is possible that the vision of America as utopia was inherited unquestioningly from the early settlers, and that the need to subdue nature and resolve the problems of production and communication was more exigent in the vast wilderness of the United States. Technology and capitalism were seen as inseparable, and both formed part of the American dream. Segal ascribes the utopian conservatism and technological optimism of Americans to "cultural complacency", but does not analyse the underlying cultural impetus. It is, in fact, not clear whether he intends his book to be about utopianism or the cult of technology.

New conquests, new Churches

P. J. Marshall

STEPHEN NEILL
A History of Christianity in India 1707-1858
578pp. Cambridge University Press. £45.
0 521 30376 1

A History of Christianity in India 1707-1858 is the second instalment of what was intended to be a three-volume survey. Unhappily, that undertaking will not be completed. This volume has appeared posthumously, following Stephen Neill's death in the summer of 1984. The loss of the last volume, which would have dealt with Bishop Neill's own lifetime, is particularly sad. The early part of Neill's working life was spent in India as a missionary and as a bishop. He had a significant role in some of the events that he would have described. His personal insights have, however, illuminated what he wrote about the past in ways that have enriched this volume, which abundantly illustrates other qualities that fitted him so well for the task he had set himself. He was a formidable linguist, not only in Tamil, but in the languages of the very diverse groups of European Christians who went to India. Above all, in writing about India, Neill was a most attractive mixture, of a scholar trying to maintain a rigorous academic detachment and an individual with a deeply held point of view.

That point of view, clear in the first two volumes and due no doubt to have emerged even more powerfully in the third, was an insistence on the essential Indianness of Indian Christianity. Although historically it may have owed much to foreign influences, Christianity is not an alien or exotic plant in Indian soil. "Christianity was in no sense a European religion - it had been in India a great deal longer than Islam, and was Asian in its origins." In *A History of Christianity in India: The beginnings to AD 1707* (reviewed in the TLS, May 4, 1984) Neill described how Portuguese missionary endeavour had spread Christianity beyond the bounds of the ancient communities who believed their Church had been founded by the apostle Thomas. But Portuguese power was always limited and, outside Goa, Christian groups developed autonomous lives of their own as they adapted to varying local conditions.

The theme of an autonomous growth of Indian Christianity would seem at first sight rather more difficult to sustain for the period of this second volume. A much more pervasive and less ephemeral foreign intrusion took place. British conquest began in the mid-eighteenth century and was virtually complete a hundred years later. The creation of the British empire in India coincided with a great revival of European Christian missionary zeal, affecting German Lutherans early in the eighteenth century, spreading to British Protestants of most denominations by the end of

the century, involving American Protestants and, by the 1830s, European Catholics. Once the new British regime had (in 1833) ended the restrictions it had imposed on European residence in India, it provided missionaries of all sorts with a framework within which they could operate with almost complete freedom. Even Catholics found few obstacles. As a result, what Neill calls a missionary "occupation" had covered much of India by the time this volume stops in 1858. In an appendix Neill lists over 150 mission stations set up by Protestants by then.

For all the effort expended, as Neill readily concedes, the Indian response in terms of church membership, however that is defined, had been generally disappointing by the middle of the nineteenth century. The Catholics had not as yet developed their new missionary offensives to add very significantly to the three-quarters of a million Catholics thought to be in India by the end of the eighteenth century. The Protestants, whose impact was much more recent, could only claim 90,000 church members by 1851, although they were beginning to make contact with the "tribal" peoples, who were later to prove a rich source of recruits.

Recruitment on so limited a scale might suggest that an alien occupation force had done little more than incorporate a few camp-followers. This is not, however, a conclusion that Neill is prepared to accept, even if it is what most missionaries probably intended. Neill is critical of what he calls the "colonial mentality" of both the Catholics and the Protestants, British or non-British alike. They

tried to maintain a tight control from Europe and were very reluctant to promote Indian clergy. Henry Venn's principles that churches overseas should be self-sufficient and self-supporting were rarely put into effect. Only the Thomas Christians evaded the well-intentioned, if stifling, embrace, in this case from the Church of England. Yet for all this, Neill still insists that the missionaries were unwittingly sowing the seeds of new Indian Churches which were to grow in their own way.

Those Indians who adhered to Christianity did so, Neill believes, for reasons that had little directly to do with the colonial context in which it was presented. He describes two patterns of adherence: "community" movements of peoples of low caste standing, and individual conversions among the high castes. The establishment of Christianity in the sixteenth century among the Paravars of the Fisher Coast was one of the major episodes of Neill's first volume; its emergence among another southern people, the Shanars or Nadars of Travancore and Tinnevely, is central to this one. It was the first of a new wave of community conversions. The penetration of British power into the far south by the beginning of the nineteenth century and the desire of a low-caste group to improve their status seem to provide the setting. German Lutherans supported by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and their Indian assistants were the agents through whom the Nadars made their choice for Christianity. Neill argues that the much-publicized conversions of well-to-do young men, often Brahmins, in cities like Calcutta, Madras or

Bombay, were equally acts of autonomous choice. He believes that Church of Scotland missionaries of high calibre, such as Alexander Duff and John Wilson, put the case for Christianity on to an altogether higher intellectual plane. "The Scots succeeded because what they offered was so much better than what was being offered by others." Young Indians who yielded to them did so, in Neill's view, out of intellectual conviction.

If Christianity was to sink deep roots in nineteenth-century India, the attitude of the state was probably as important as the attitude of the "parent" Churches. The Churches may have tried to keep control; for the most part the state did not. The East India Company was not a Christian state, much as some Christians might hope that it would. Neill takes the view that the Company had, in any case, to be pushed into correcting a long neglect of Christianity by giving up its guardianship of Hindu temples and by conceding certain civil rights to Christians, such as the right of converts to retain property. Wherever the legal position, Neill accepts that the majority of the East India Company's subjects must have found the religious neutrality of government very obvious. Nevertheless, by the twentieth century the neutrality of government and of independence of Christianity did become more and more apparent. The Churches were in fact able to disentangle themselves from the colonial régime, and as the Raj fell away, to take their place in an independent India. That this could be so is also the achievement of men like Stephen Neill.

felt threatened by the Muslims as well as the alien tribesmen encircling them. Their rulers periodically sought help from other Christian nations, notably from the Orthodox Russians, the Catholic powers of Western Europe and the Protestant British. The first to respond to these advances were the Portuguese, who early in the sixteenth century had established relations with China, Japan and central Asia from their bases in India and already had their eyes on the legendary lands of Prester John. Their objects were partly political and commercial, but they knew from experience that the flag sometimes followed the Cross. The Jesuits were well equipped in zeal and zeal to take the lead in such ventures, and they certainly needed these qualities to overcome the difficulties and dangers of reaching Ethiopia, once the Turks had gained control of Egypt and the Red Sea.

The various Portuguese missions which were sent to Ethiopia in the course of the sixteenth century had provided its rulers with much of

the military and technical aid that they needed, but little was left to show for their pains. It often as not they found that aid given for fighting the infidel and promoting the Catholic cause was being used against family rivals and other domestic enemies. It was not until Paez reached Ethiopia in 1603 that the Jesuits began to make real headway. This was due perhaps as much to Paez's persuasive personality as to the appeal of his Jesuitical piety and practices. He went to considerable lengths to adapt these to the long-established and often bewildering mixture of Judaic and early Christian rituals and beliefs of the ancient monotheistic Ethiopian Church. He succeeded in establishing close relations with the Emperor Susenyos and finally persuaded him to accept the Catholic faith and to transfer his allegiance from the moribund Coptic See of Alexandria to the Pope in Rome, who, Susenyos had been assured, could also call on the wealth and might of the King of Spain should the need arise.

When Paez died, soon after Susenyos's conversion, he was succeeded by a man of very different character. Alfonso Mendes was a malicious Jesuit of inflexible views who made the fatal mistake of alienating the local gentry and the people by trying to suppress what the indigenous usages which Paez had tolerated - much-respected customs such as polygamy and female circumcision and observance of numerous local feasts and saints' days which did not appear in the Catholic calendar. In this and other ways Susenyos was obliged by Ethiopian custom and civil disorder to give way to more conservative régime, which not only expelled the Jesuits but put an end to missionary activity in the empire for 20 years.

Father Caraman's carefully researched well-written book is based on material in the Jesuit archives in Rome, and provides a companion to Donald Crumrine's study of the equally unsuccessful Protestant and Catholic missions in Ethiopia in the nineteenth century. *Priests and Politics* (1975), by Father Caraman, how strongly the people of Ethiopia and their ancestors attached to the distinctive creeds and beliefs of their ancient Church, and believed that they were better in every way than those who were missionaries sought to introduce. The suspected that missionary activities allowed to take root, he believed that the less spiritual encroachments. While he commended the missionaries for the material and technical expertise that were offered, he was careful to be no European before it was too late.

Boom years in education

Claire Cross

MARIA DOWLING
Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII
268pp. Croom Helm. £25.
0 709 08644 4

For a brief moment on the accession of Henry VIII in 1509, English humanists actually believed that the world lay at their feet. "Heaven smiles, earth rejoices; all is milk and honey and nectar", Mountjoy wrote to Erasmus.

That optimism was well and truly banished. Generosity and wealth with unstinting hand. Our king's heart is set not upon gold or jewels or mines of ore, but upon virtue, reputation, and eternal renown. Here is a mere sample: a few days ago, when he said that he longed to be a more accomplished scholar, I remarked, "we do not expect this of you; what we do expect is that you should foster and encourage those who are scholars." "Of course," he replied, "for without them we could scarcely exist."

It is so publicly espousing the new learning the young king seemed about to open access to power to what had previously been a beleaguered band of educational pioneers. The importance of this, albeit partial, capture of royal patronage for the advancement of humanism in Henrician England forms the theme of this attractively written book.

With Henry VIII at the apex of the patronage pyramid and the humanists at the bottom, courtiers such as Mountjoy, Sir Anthony Denny and the royal physician, Dr Butts, played a vital role as intermediaries in bringing promising scholars to the attention of the king. The young men recruited to serve the State did not necessarily go on to advocate religious change, as More himself signally did not, but it is undoubtedly true that at the time of the divorce Henry found valuable support for his opposition of Catherine from university intellectuals like Crammer, who had progressed from reading Erasmus's *Novum Testamentum* to showing a cautious interest in Luther's writings.

Ironically, Catherine fell a victim to the very movement she had sponsored, for, aside from the alliance between the king's grandmother, the Lady Margaret Beaufort, and John Fisher, which resulted in the foundation of two Cambridge colleges, the Spanish queen had been the first major female patron of humanists at court. By her insistence upon a humanist education for her only surviving child, Princess Mary, she made such an upbringing respectable, indeed fashionable, for a sprinkling of well-born girls as well as for boys. Catherine had moved in humanist circles in Spain and her employment of the Spanish scholar, Vives, re-

quires little explanation. Less predictable was her successor's panchant for humanists and evangelicals. Although she had spent her most impressionable years in the environs of the French court, Anne Boleyn had no claims to the classical erudition displayed by More's learned daughters: she nevertheless exercised considerable influence in the promotion of humanists so long as she retained the king's affections.

Maria Dowling sees the contribution of the last of the wives of Henry VIII, Catherine Parr, traditionally regarded as a self-appointed governess of her three royal stepchildren, as being less crucial than that of these two predecessors. By the last decade of the reign the die was cast: the Greens had triumphed over the Trojans at both Oxford and Cambridge and the universities more than ever before had become the recruiting ground for the State's servants, who were now increasingly laymen. At least in the sixteenth century the Tudor State more and more realized that it needed its universities, and this study details precisely how this educational revolution was achieved.

Struggles of a termagant

Caroline Bingham

PATRICIA HILL BUCHANAN
Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scots
287pp. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. £15.
0 7073 0424 5

"These dull and squalid intrigues of a selfish, sensual termagant" was Andrew Lang's harsh summation of the career and character of Margaret Tudor. Patricia Hill Buchanan sets herself to present her subject in a more favourable light, but Margaret Tudor is not an easy subject for reassessment.

The most straightforward way to present a case for Margaret is to stress her difficulties. She was the elder daughter of Henry VII, born in 1489, brought up in the utmost luxury the English court could provide, and given at least some share in the education of her elder brother, Prince Arthur, under Lincoc, Colet and Grocy. Status, pomp, and later, power interested her more than learning, and her marriage in 1503, while only thirteen, to the twenty-nine-year-old James IV of Scotland, seemed to promise the fulfilment of her ambitions. The marriage was intended to seal a treaty of perpetual peace between Scotland

and England, but ten years later the two kingdoms were again at war; James IV died at the disastrous battle of Flodden. Margaret had already borne him five children and was pregnant with a sixth; but only the fifth survived infancy, to be crowned as James V of Scotland at the age of thirteen months. His minority witnessed a sustained struggle for power between his mother, who sought to establish a regency which supported alliance with England, and an opposition which looked to the support of France.

Margaret's position as the sister of Henry VIII, the victor of Flodden, would have taxed the ability of the most skillful politician; instead she was arrogant, demanding and devoid of the slightest sense of the art of the possible. Her first, and irrevocable, error was her marriage to Archibald Douglas, sixth earl of Angus, whose Anglophile politics were merely the vehicle for his personal ambitions. She expected support from a brother and a husband both of whom ruthlessly exploited her, and then castigated her when she turned for a time to the man who had replaced her as regent of Scotland, the Francophile party's nominee, John, Duke of Albany. The influence of Albany, who was linked by marriage to the family of Pope Clement VII, eventually gained her a divorce from Angus. But divorce brought

upon her a torrent of vituperation from Henry VIII, who told her that marriage had been instituted in Paradise, and the divorce was damnable. Margaret was cowed by her brother's wrath, but not deterred from taking a third husband, Henry Stewart, whom her son later obligingly created Lord Methven. Meanwhile Angus used the support of Henry VIII to secure the regency for himself, and kept the young King James V in a tutelage which was close to imprisonment, until he escaped at the age of sixteen in 1528. With the assistance of Angus's enemies, including Margaret, he then asserted his own power, banishing his stepfather and most of his kindred. Thereafter he maintained a strong alliance with France for the rest of his reign. Margaret was a disapproving spectator of his successive French marriages, to Madeleine of France and Mary of Guise, though the latter was clever enough to win her approval with an adroit show of deference and respect.

Patricia Buchanan argues that Margaret showed herself at her best in her dedication to her son's interests, which transcended her attachment to her native country, and that she was "in the final analysis successful beyond her fondest dream" when her great-grandson James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603 - though whether her immortal part derived satisfaction from his posthumous triumph is beyond our knowledge. In her endeavour to present Margaret in a sympathetic light Buchanan from time to time makes use of an incongruous ingredient of an otherwise scholarly book. Thus, of Margaret's temporary flight to England in 1515:

As they rode down the hill and along the road past the sleeping village, a chill wind blew gusts of fine rain to their faces. Margaret, pushing back the hood with which she had been concealing her face, took a deep breath of the bracing air - it was the wind of freedom.

Despite the better-documented statements of her charitable biographer, it is difficult to avoid the impression that Andrew Lang's judgement of Margaret Tudor was not far wrong.

The ninth volume to appear in the projected twelve-volume *History of Lincolnshire* is Volume Four, *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire* by Graham Platts (322pp. Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, Exchange Gate Arch, Lincoln LN2 1PZ, £13. 0 902668 03 X). Dr Platts considers his subject in eight chapters: "Lincolnshire's medieval lords", "The medieval peasantry", "Agriculture in medieval Lincolnshire", "Rural crafts, occupations, and marketing", "The Black Death and after", "Towns and townships", "Law and disorder" and "Culture in medieval Lincolnshire", to which he adds two appendices on "Lincolnshire markets and fairs, 1227-1485" and "Poll tax returns from the South Riding of Lindsey". There are also a bibliography, seven tables and eighty-six illustrations in black and white.



"The Tower of London from the Thames" by James Lawson Stewart will be included in the sale of English Drawings and Watercolours at Christie's, London, on April 29.

Conflict of creeds

Darrell Bates

PHILIP CARAMAN
The Lost Empire: The story of the Jesuits in Ethiopia 1555-1634
176pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £13.95.
0 283 99254 9

The Lost Empire is a scholarly account of the unsuccessful attempts of the Jesuits to establish themselves in Ethiopia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It will also appeal to everyone who is interested in present-day Ethiopia and to those who are confused about the underlying causes of its recent disasters. Philip Caraman is a Jesuit writing about Jesuits, but he is detached in his judgments and critical in his appraisals, and many of his observations relate as much to the present as to the past.

There have been Christians in Ethiopia since the fourth century, but they have subsequently

its neglect by scholars - although, as Fairbank points out in his fine introductory survey of the field, this also stems from their failure to understand the key role of the missionaries in China's nineteenth-century relations with the West.

The contributors to this volume have now made a significant attempt to assess the missionaries' general influence on Chinese attitudes and values as well as their role in creating a Chinese Protestant Church. A collection of essays is usually rather disparate, but Fairbank's introduction brings unity and there are a number of common themes. Overall, the book succeeds in conveying a coherent picture of a complex reality.

Few missionaries understood the society they so assiduously sought to change, and they were usually convinced of the superiority of Western culture and sought to promote its laissez-faire capitalist values. This optimism with regard to the West coexisted uneasily with a theological perspective which stressed the conflict between the world and the believer. The resulting view of Chinese society is expressed, for example, by J. J. Dooley: "heathen, sensual, vicious and wicked". The missionaries were prompted to write extensively on Western history and society. They wrote in Chinese and their use of the vernacular ensured wide dissemination of their views.

so that several missionary works on secular themes were highly influential in forming late nineteenth-century Chinese views on the West.

The religious tracts the missionaries disseminated also had a wide readership. The effect of these writings was twofold. They fed the growth of anti-Christian feeling among the Chinese gentry, while at the same time appealing to dissident elements within the general population. Reasons for the differing reactions are well brought out in these essays, and stem from the common view of Christianity as a heterodox religion. Sectarian groups were rife in nineteenth-century China and were regarded with hostility by the political establishment. Daniel Bays's essay argues that many Chinese sectarians became Christian converts. The mental process involved is well exemplified in Richard Bohr's study of the personal pilgrimages of Liang Fa, the most celebrated of early converts. The role of Protestantism in relation to the Taiping Rebellion is also put in context.

One looks forward to more extensive treatment of these themes, after the important advances represented in this volume in our understanding of nineteenth-century Chinese Christianity. It can now be hoped that this work will be complemented by study of the role of Chinese Christians themselves.

The heathen and the heterodox

R. E. Whyte

SUZANNE WILSON BARNETT and JOHN KING FAIRBANK (Editors)
Christianity in China: Early Protestant missionary writings
237pp. Harvard University Press. £18.50.
0 674 12881 8

Protestant Christianity has always stressed the importance of the written word in its evangelistic process. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to learn that the production of written materials formed a major part of the Protestant missionary enterprise in nineteenth-century China. Their value was all the greater in view of the problems that foreign missionaries encountered in even reaching many areas of the country, the difficulties of the Chinese spoken language and the importance of literacy within Chinese society. *Christianity in China: Protestant missionary writings*, edited by Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank, is a collection of essays by nine American scholars that derive from research in the Harvard-Yenching collection of missionary writings in Chinese, and is published in the Harvard Studies in American-East Asian Relations series. The low quality and voluminous nature of that resource of material have contributed to

Orderly disorder

J. A. Sharpe

ANTHONY FLETCHER and JOHN STEVENSON
Order and Disorder in Early Modern England
198pp. Cambridge University Press. £27.50.
0 521 25846 6

Over the past two decades the problem of order has come to be regarded as central to the study of early modern England. Turning from the more familiar themes of parliamentary politics or traditional economic history, scholars have confronted the question of how English men and women lived together in their various social units: the family, the village or town community, the county, even the nation-state; and the volume under review is a very welcome, if, for the uninitiated, bewilderingly various addition to earlier work on the themes it addresses.

It is to list the topics covered: illustrates the growth of the issues involved. C. S. Lewis contributes an important statement of his views on popular religion and the Pilgrimage of Grace, an essay all the more welcome because it constitutes a corrective to the view of that episode. Popular religion (at least resistance) also forms the theme of Holmes's study of popular politics as exhibited in the struggle between the crown and the commonsense of the century, and of John Stevenson's study of the notion of order in the thought of E. P. Thompson's notion of

the "moral economy" of the eighteenth-century crowd. Susan Amussen writes on gender, family and the social order, an essay which whets the appetite for her forthcoming book on the subject, while David Underdown, arguing that a "crisis of gender relations" occurred around 1600, describes the squalid and skimping of the period. Margaret Spufford contributes a rather tetchy piece attacking the simplistic connections which she feels some historians have made between puritanism and social control, while religion also looms large in a joint essay by John Morrill and J. D. Walter on order and disorder in the English Revolution. Attitudes among the élite are examined in a characteristically penetrating essay by Anthony Fletcher on honour, reputation and local office-holding in Elizabethan and Stuart England.

The greatest problem, perhaps, with a collection of this kind is that of tracing and explaining long-term change. A number of contributors, for example, are convinced that the century before the outbreak of the Civil War was an especially difficult one, in which numerous contemporaries were certain that society was in imminent danger of falling apart. These contributors are undoubtedly correct, but the notion is not one which should be accepted uncritically. One wonders, for instance, how far the vividness of the "crisis of gender relations" is a product of the existence of a popular printing press, rather than of real changes in

behaviour. Other difficulties occur when the editors, in what is generally a very effective introduction, range deeply into the eighteenth century and attempt, at times a little unconvincedly, to drag some of the interpretations developed by historians of that period back into the Tudor and Stuart eras. Conversely, Spufford is the only contributor to raise at length the problem of change and continuity from the Middle Ages onwards, and joins those other historians who have made comparisons between the century before 1640 and that great earlier wave of demographic expansion which was ended by the Black Death. Perhaps the most important and obvious question which this book raises is why, despite widespread fears, society manifestly did not disintegrate, even after the execution of Charles I. The social tensions and disorder described here existed within a remarkably orderly and secure context.

Any work of synthesis on this subject is a long way off, but the contributors to *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* have added greatly to our appreciation of the issues involved. The book has been well edited and produced (although I was personally a little dismayed to see two of my books conflated in the footnotes, and to find myself referred to as "Paul Sharpe" in the index) while the introduction is a strong one, providing an overview which will be of great use to those coming fresh to the subject.

Bread, milk and Mother Goose

Jenny Penberthy

SANDRAM. GILBERT
Emily's Bread
 103pp. Norton. £6.20.
 0393301508
HILDA MORLEY
To Hold in My Hand: Selected poems, 1955-1983
 213pp. The Sheep Meadow Press; distributed by Persea Books, 225 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012. \$8.95.
 0935296492
GEORGE EVANS
Nightvision
 59pp. Pig Press, 7 Cross View Terrace, Neville's Cross, Durham, DH1 4JY.
 Paperback, £3.20.
 0903997762
JOSEPHINE MILES
Collected Poems 1930-83
 260pp. University of Illinois Press; distributed by Harper and Row. £19.25.
 0252010175
ELDER OLSON
Last Poems
 59pp. University of Chicago Press. £12.75 (paperback, £5.95).
 0226428981

Many of the poems in these collections are written for or about other poets. The problem is that such poems remind us of what we might be reading instead. This is especially true of Sandra Gilbert's *Emily's Bread*; two poems are written explicitly for Emily Dickinson, who is also the spirit behind the book. One waits for signs of Dickinson's formal influence, or of a linguistic rebellion similar to hers, only to find that what inspires these poems is Dickinson's own mind and experience (the world is very much there to serve; it is her agency), they are an immobilized array of portraits of other women - two of the volume's five sections are named "Daguerreotypes" and "Still Lives". One tires early of all this political orthodoxy. The poem might have seemed more interesting had they appeared fifty years ago.

Hilda Morley's *To Hold in My Hand: Selected poems, 1955-1983* has none of this assertive presence. Tentativeness and hesitation are fundamental to her method. Each poem scatters its words and phrases over the page, choreographing our reading, telling us where to pause, where to breathe. Morley's debt to Charles Olson is apparent throughout. She lived in Black Mountain, North Carolina, during its heyday in the 1950s and two poems acknowledge her friendship with Olson. There are some successful pieces in this first volume. "The Grasshopper" finds its tense, ready pauses and leaps in the poem's compressed shape.

George Evans's *Nightvision*, published in a beautifully designed paperback by Pig Press, is

"slant". *Emily's Bread* is hectoring, see-here poetry drained of impact by too much telling. "Text", "grammar", "syntax", "the white spaces around words" - these words and phrases appear in the poems as if they were sufficient signal of the poet's concern with technique.

When the poem is not probing the poet's own mind and experience (the world is very much there to serve; it is her agency), they are an immobilized array of portraits of other women - two of the volume's five sections are named "Daguerreotypes" and "Still Lives". One tires early of all this political orthodoxy. The poem might have seemed more interesting had they appeared fifty years ago.

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The grasshopper
 waits,
 electric with attention.
 Finally
 now he knows: Now It's Time.
 Move then.

Minute claws pressed into his belly
 he takes off . . .
 The momentary heat of the linebreak produces an apt visual equivalent for the action of the grasshopper, but it is less effective as sound. There is not enough coincidence or, even better, near-coincidence between linebreak and the particular speech cadence. The poems are unremitting in their restlessness, in their obedience to this scattered, interrupted form. One notices the absence of what Louis Zukofsky called "proper breathing space, ease, grace". A vulnerable, slightly precious presence emerges in these small interruptions which come more and more to signify a catch in the throat, a bitten lip of regret. Where, in Emily Dickinson's frequent waverings, there is variety - questioning, musing, hyperbole, numbed bleak waiting - here there is insecurity, a minimalism that doesn't trust itself. With so few natural connections made between the visual (the linebreak) and the aural (speech cadence) it is no surprise to find in many of her poems an appended allusion to the connections she can't trust words alone to make. One expects ellipses and compression from her form, but in fact the editing is insufficient.

George Evans's *Nightvision*, published in a beautifully designed paperback by Pig Press, is

also much cooered with the line, with line-breaks, and the spaces those breaks leave. It is a further pleasure to find here no hint of excess or the arbitrary. Evans's poems also call to mind a Zukofsky dictum, "Condensation is more than half of composition"; they are stripped to bare articulate outlines. Some are arranged to allow for alternative reading - right to left and top to bottom. This is poetry as configuration. "The Bridge" begins:

A movement cross- over
 water taking light
 rips and declines the eye

The horizontal, vertical and diagonal are held in architectural tension; the line itself is metaphor. "Journal: A List" nods in its title to the dangers of the vertical-line poem becoming a list but nowhere itself falls victim. There's an appealing inattentiveness and solidity about these poems. They engage with the world, rather than bludgeoning us with subjectivity. And some, for all their spareness, are gorgeous, glowing with primary colours like the most memorable work of Emily Dickinson and William Carlos Williams.

Josephine Miles's *Collected Poems* is prolix by comparison. Her poems are chatty, long-lined, Californian, spanning the years 1930 to 1983. We expect, and we find, some variation in subject and style. Among the political poems alone, Miles includes poems of deprivation from the 1930s, Second World War poems and Vietnam poems. The conversational style is in fact a development of an early, somewhat tighter, though still colloquial style. In her early work she combines, in a way that seems effortless, the rhythms of speech with the artifice of the nursery rhyme, with results which both soothe and unsettle. "Loose" begins:

A gracious number of dark-witted thieves
 stole all I had, in a pack as thick as that.
 I was so disappointed I rocked as I sat.

It's a pleasure at last to strike humour. The collection includes a number of such nursery-type joke poems. There is no intriguing small tradition of women poets, including Emily Dickinson, Gertrude Stein, Laura Riding, Stevie Smith and Lorine Niedecker, who are drawn to the rhythms and locutions of Mother Goose.

Josephine Miles can convey a pleasing sense of the American idiom, though her ear for the music in speech is not finely developed. She is, however, aware that idiosyncratic speech unlocks emotion. "Views To See Clayton From" identifies a variety of allegiances in the complaining and harranging language of a family outraged by a wayward member. The effortless surfaces of her poems belie their psychological penetration.

Her conversational poems become increasingly loose, prosy, even garrulous under, I suspect, the influence of the Beats. Josephine

Miles, as the poems about teaching, student conferences, and visiting poets reveal, teaches at the University of California, and there are very much Berkeley poems. We are referred throughout to its streets, its hills, and especially its campus. There is also a rather anomalous, self-conscious academic presence in some of the work. Of San Francisco's fog: "The fog comes in as Sandburg says it does." And among all the casual chat, there are some rather fuzzy lines: "Between, in middle distance where the seasons / in plenitude emerge."

It is surprising that from these hundreds of poems, many of them written in the first person, so little sense of the poet emerges. Her voice is difficult to characterize. But Josephine Miles's subject is the world (a small Californian slice of it), rendered best in the quirky, idiosyncratic style of the nursery rhyme. The vigorous American folk tradition gives the best of her poems their appeal. From "Before":

Where had I been, oh tell me.
 And where
 Under those vast sunny
 Apricot trees to the front yard?
 Go tell Aunt Rhodie the old gray goose it dead.

Elder Olson's *Last Poems* is made work while by ope poem. I wonder about its originality, it is entirely of his own making, and it is so unlike the others in this annotated volume? Or is it part transcription and part mastery non-interference? So few of these poets trust their poems to communicate and Elder Olson is generally no exception. But this one is too good to be damaged by his handiwork. "QWERTYUIOP - Connect by my typewriter". The poet's ear for America idiom turns out to be sharp, and his restraint a singular instance of tact. "Brave New World: A Philosophical Conversation":

- Wot he do-est that blame hummer?
 He ben hammer two hold days.
 - Claim he maken a noo wot.
 - Noo wot? Wot wrong with thiam?

- He claim everthin wroog with it,
 Chaim Gawd dunno beas bout chaptend,
 He say Gawd couldee wot for him.

- Wair he gonas put tha o-shins?
 - He say, ain go-ee be no o-shins.
 He claim o-shins jes a noins.
 They full, you drowen youself in em,
 They dry, you fall in, break you neck.

- Theo wair he gonas git his wair?
 - He go-en take some wairder with in
 Ho sammiches on booze a course.

- He make stals too? - Nah, no stals;
 Ain no good fer nuthin ohow.
 - Summuns says this wot a stals.
 - Nuthin to it. Nuthin to it.

- How do you know? Dpan twinkle poss.
 - They eveo elains tha suo a stals.
 - Shoot, jever see tha suo at night?

- He gon live in that blame tho?
 - Hell no; he go set in it a place,
 Theo he go take and burn it up,
 Claim that wot Gawd, ifn used his haid,
 Shooda done with tha fool thin in the first place.

"Sacred Ridges above Diamond Creek," is written "for Les Murray and for my poet tape recorder". The transcribed response is artful ("Mr Fox in his red hunting coat" is a line from Les Murray's poem "The Fox"). Reason is monotheistic but arid, the senses randy but plotless. On the other hand, reason has no name, girls do.

The sour political wisdom of "That Radical Politics Is Impossible" -

ear to an achote
 sweats and thinks
 while at ground level
 Catherine's long thigh is getting stroked.

Reason is monotheistic but arid, the senses randy but plotless. On the other hand, reason has no name, girls do.

The sour political wisdom of "That Radical Politics Is Impossible" -

So belt up
 or put up or shut up because
 to him which hath some gravity
 shall givvy be given forever.

is belied in "The Fall of the West", which surveys the ruins of "a college", which is "a kind of, sort of barracks // plus public house where the gone pale folk / laid claim to worship knowledge". The poem ends "Look, in the shrubbery, that odd beast: / And what are these, bright green birds?" A civilization's collapse releases the bounty of colour, so that this modern-day "Jig, barbarian, over these / machicolated ruins". The arcane architectural term for a kind of defensive structure outlives its referent. Our afterlife is verbal, and without words we must name the creatures anew.

On the frontier

Wendy James

B.E. HARRELL-BOND
Imposing Aid: Emergency assistance to refugees
 400pp. Oxford University Press. £15 (paperback, £2.50).
 0192616137

Imposing Aid is a breathless, impassioned documentation of a moment in the history of a war-torn border, of crowded refugee camps, broken bodies, minds bruised, enraged and numbed. The rational administration of charity, plans agreed on paper far away, the fair distribution of food, medicine and vehicle spares, together with the goodwill and sense of empathic and local officials alike, all are sacrificed to a monstrous confusion of fears and purposes. Case histories, letters, statistical surveys, despairing anecdotes are bundled together in a book of over 400 moving and worrying pages.

In 1979 the government of Idi Amin in Uganda was overthrown. From that date refugees began moving from the north-west of that country into the Sudan, partly because of military actions taken in revenge upon their home areas. By 1982 the movement had become a mass migration including traders, professionals and former soldiers as well as peasants. Those concerned with the administration of assistance tumbled over each other to set up their programmes. B. E. Harrell-Bond gives us an extraordinary glimpse into the machinery of this emergency aid, and the jelling and jealousies which disfigured its implementation, not only between national (in this case Sudanese) authorities and overseas organizations, but also between the latter themselves.

Her recommendations, arrived at after some years' alarming field experience, and drawing on the findings of local research assistants and

Oxford students (as well as seminars which drew in refugee representation), are briefly as follows. Aid agencies, and most particularly the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, should not adopt too high a profile and too independent a policy when dealing with those who cross a frontier and register as "refugees". Aid should as far as possible be co-ordinated with, even channelled through, the institutions and practices of the host country, in order that links of a constructive kind may be fostered between the newcomers and their hosts.

Running through the study is a contrast between designated refugee settlements and "self-settled" communities. The latter often show independence, enterprise and good neighbourly relations with Sudanese villages, while receiving aid only haphazardly or unofficially. The former rarely achieve any kind of self-reliance but become dependent upon the authoritarian hand that feeds them, while resentment may fester in the local host population. Defined as temporary inhabitants, registered refugees fear the possibility of repatriation, sometimes supported by a policy by the agencies.

In the particular circumstances of the Yei River District during 1982-4, when this study was carried out, these arguments appear persuasive. But if we take a step back from the flurry of indignation generated by this book, and look again at the wider geographical, political and historical context, we might question their advisability in the long term. To north and south of the area studied, for hundreds of miles of territory, civil war has raged for the better part of many young people's lives. Nimeriya's Sudan, a régime much praised by Harrell-Bond for its generosity to the particular refugees of her study, was at the same time provoking military resistance in other regions of the southern Sudan, from which many people were even then fleeing for their lives into Ethiopia. Are host governments pursuing civil

war in one area always to be supported in their welcome of refugee citizens to a neighbouring, rival region? Would not this kind of policy be likely to politicize a situation further and precipitate hostilities in the future? Given the past experience of the "self-settlement" of Sudanese refugees into Uganda, cannot such integration bring its own problems?

The history of Sudan's international frontiers suggests some answers to questions of this kind. In former times there were wide buffer zones between states, in which there was plenty of room for fugitives to find shelter, communities to regroup, and political opportunists to raise small armies. But in the last century the frontier zones saw increasingly brutal disruption through the expansion of large-scale armed conquest and slave-trading networks, in their effect not unlike the disruption of modern military struggle. These days it would seem that while a strict frontier exists in international law, it is rarely respected or policed. Where the rule of law of an established government does not reach, those with the guns can still treat the frontier as a no man's land.

But the killing power of modern weaponry has transformed the old reality. Frontier zones no longer provide a safe refuge for anyone, and it is a romantic illusion to suppose that the institutions and traditional social mechanisms of host countries like the Sudan can cope. If refugees in such large, poor countries are to be given any tangible rights or protection, in the face of the arbitrary power of modern arms and other technology, then an international presence must oversee arrangements on the ground. One shudders over many scenes in the pages of this book. But without the arrival of the UNHCR, at least symbols of the rule of law, might it not all have been much worse? And might not the international presence at this moment be mitigating the volatile and dangerous possibilities on this border in relation to current developments in Uganda?

The case for killing

R. G. Frey

HELGA KUHSÉ AND PETER SINGER
Should the Baby Live? The problem of handicapped infants
 220pp. Oxford University Press. £12.50 (paperback, £3.95).
 0191745151

Ought we to prolong the lives of severely handicapped infants, no matter what their prospects? An increasing number of people, including parents and doctors, are coming to believe that we ought not. They think that such factors as the nature and severity of handicap and the projected length and quality of life are relevant to the decision to prolong life; and, often, such factors will count in favour of allowing the infant to die, through not feeding or operating upon it, say. If one then accepts that there is no morally viable distinction between killing and letting die, not feeding or operating upon the infant amounts to killing it; and this, the killing of severely handicapped infants, is infanticide. The point to this line of thinking, of course, is that infanticide becomes morally permissible.

This admirable addition to Oxford's Studies in Bioethics series argues the case for infanticide, and it thus joins a growing number of works devoted to this end. It is a sensitive, thoughtful, and rigorously argued book; and if some of the material is familiar, it is nevertheless shaped and presented in such a way as always to be stimulating. Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer touch upon all the relevant philosophical issues in remarkably clear terms; they weave the philosophy into case histories in most skilful and illuminating ways.

Behind the claim that infanticide is permissible lies an attack upon two principles of traditional morality. The first is that all human life is of equal value. Those which hold this principle, however unimpressed with quality-of-life considerations, but many find this difficult. I suspect that more they learn about the lives that new-borns are forced to endure: An

who, severely deformed at birth, underwent eleven operations which enabled it to survive to the age of four; his wife described this as "keeping the baby alive long enough for nature to kill it". To the light of such cases, it is increasingly argued that the value of a life is a function of its quality, its quality a function of its richness, and its richness a function of its capacities or potentialities for enrichment; and the fact that the potentialities for enrichment are severely truncated or absent in some new-borns. Infants born with only half a brain or with severe forms of spina bifida are cases in point. To prolong such lives is to prolong lives of a quality that we would not wish upon even our worst enemies; yet, presumably, we are supposed to think that these lives are every bit as valuable as the lives of ordinary new-borns.

The second principle attacked is the sanctity-of-life doctrine. Two central problems arise. First, to the extent that the doctrine is a religious one, it may not be acceptable to those whose ethical views are not grounded in religion. Second, the doctrine has traditionally covered only human life and has drawn a sharp line, morally, between killing humans and killing animals. It thus erects membership of a particular species as a morally relevant characteristic in killing, when in fact the capacities of some animals are equal or superior to those of some humans and the quality of life of some animals exceeds that of some humans. Again, if gender and race are not morally relevant to the wrongness of killing, why should species be?

Kuhse and Singer endorse the familiar view that what matters is that the thing killed is a continuing self, able to see itself as existing over time, able to have desires with respect to the future, including the desire to go on living, and able, therefore, to have these desires frustrated. To kill a person, or a being that can envisage itself with a future and can have desires with respect to that future, is typically to kill a being that has a powerful desire to go on living; and this is wrong. Though the overwhelming majority of humans will turn out to be persons, not all will; the irreversibly comatose, and severely mentally handicapped new-

borns are obvious examples. Thus, the killing of a defective new-born is not the destruction of a person, and it is this that is of crucial moral significance in killing.

The main problem for anyone with this view is to provide effective safeguards against killing healthy new-borns, who equally are not persons. Kuhse and Singer do provide safeguards; but because they do not have any extended discussion of their general moral theory, it is not always easy to appreciate the complete character of safeguards this theory permits them to construct. If, as I suspect, this theory is utilitarianism, then safeguards will often amount to facts about people's desires. Thus, it is in part the fact that parents and others want the healthy new-born that makes a difference in its case; but this then raises the question of what happens if they do not. Again, what happens if, though a healthy adult desires to carry on living, others come to desire his death as strongly as he desires to live? The answer is that people are not like this, and it is this factual claim about others' desires that is supposed to constitute the safeguard. What has to be resolved is how effective a safeguard such factual claims are.

Family and Kinship in East London (234pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £13.95. 0 7102 0914 2) by Michael Young and Peter Willmott, first published in 1957, has just been reissued with a new introduction. The authors had studied the effects of rehousing policies on working-class families who had been moved from Bethnal Green to Greenleigh. The book had predicted that social bonds would weaken largely because of the difficulty that children would have, once they had grown up and married, to live near their parents. For there would not be enough houses for all those who wanted to stay, and no space anyway on which to build more houses. In the thirty years since publication, the idea of kinship has been even further buttressed by the authors' belief, "there is plenty of evidence that kinship remains an important force in most people's lives". The wider family shows an impressive resilience.

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